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# NATURE'S MIGHTY WONDERS

BY THE REV
RICHARD NEWTON
D.D

"THE MOON PRAISES GOD BY ITS BEAUTY."
Page 68.

# NATURE'S

# MIGHTY WONDERS.

BY THE

REV. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE KING'S HIGHWAY," "THE GIANTS AND HOW TO FIGHT THEM," ETC.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the L
"All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord.

LONDON:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;

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1877.

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# Preface.

SEVERAL years ago, I met a gentleman of my acquaintance in the street who has long been connected with the publishing business. He is a worthy and honoured member of the Society of Friends. He stopped me, and said: "Friend Newton, does thee know of any book for the use of children designed to show the wisdom and goodness of God as they appear in the works of nature? A customer of mine has asked me to get him such a book. I have looked everywhere for one, but I have not found it."

My reply was: "I do not know that there is a book of the kind in existence. There are many such books for the use of grown persons, but none, I think, for *children*."

"Well, then," said he, "why can't thee write one? It is in thy line."

I thanked him for the suggestion, and said I would think about it.

The idea had never occurred to me before. It interested me greatly. I began to read upon the subject, with the intention of taking it in hand at once. But the greatness of the theme, and the difficulty of

properly handling it, caused me to pause. I felt afraid to begin it. I knew how abundant the material was, but my fear was that it would be found very difficult to weave into such a course of sermons as much of a directly religious element as ought to be mingled with them. This fear kept me back for some time from entering on the work. But finally I resolved to try. The result of this trial appears in the present volume. I trust it will not be found wanting in the element referred to.

This volume is sent forth as an experiment. It goes but a little way into the great department to which it refers. It only presents a few flowers, gathered as specimens from God's great garden. These sermons have cost me more labour than any I have yet published for the young. Two whole weeks of hard work were spent on one of them.

I trust, however, they may be of service in helping the young to "look through nature up to nature's God;" and in showing them that the God who speaks so lovingly to us in the Bible is the same God whose wisdom, power, and goodness are so wonderfully displayed in the sun, moon, stars, clouds, mountains, seas, rivers, trees, flowers, and other glorious works around us.

I hope, too, that this feeble effort may lead others to go further in this same direction than I have gone. "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" in this department; and it is land that is well worth possessing. May God add his blessing to this volume, and make it a help to the young in trying, "by searching, to find out God."

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# NATURE'S MIGHTY WONDERS.

## I.

## How God's Works Praise Him.

"All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD."—PS. cxlv. 10.

OUR last course of sermons was on Bible Wonders. We have stopped in that course, not because we had come to the end of the wonders of the Bible, for there is no end to them. We might go on talking about those wonders as long as we live. But for the sake of variety it seems better to pause in that course and take up something else. So we propose now to begin a new course. And after having talked about the wonders which we find *in* the Bible, it may be very well to turn our attention to some of the many wonders that we meet with *out* of the Bible. We have seen how full of wonders the Bible is; but when we close that blessed book, we find that there are as

many wonders outside of the Bible as there are inside of it. The world outside of the Bible we call the world of Nature. We are going now into this world for subjects to talk about. This is just like another volume written by the same Author. The Bible is called *the book of Revelation;* the world outside of the Bible is called *the book of Nature.* This new course of sermons will be about "Nature's Wonders," or how God's works praise him.

In our text David says that all God's works praise him. He means by this that everything which God has made does something to praise or glorify him. In the One hundred and forty-eighth Psalm David calls on the sun and the moon, the stars, the light, the mountains and hills, and all things, to praise God. He calls to them just as though they had tongues, like ourselves, with which they could speak and praise God. But this is not so. Yet we must remember that there are two ways in which we can speak. One is by *words;* the other is by *actions.* When we use our lips to tell of God's goodness, we are praising him with our words; but when we try earnestly to do just what he wants us to do, then we are praising him by our actions. And the old proverb says that "*actions speak louder than words.*" And *this* is the way in which God's works praise him. They stay just where he puts them. They do just what he wants them to do. They never get tired. They never stop till he tells them to do so. And this is what David means when he says, "All thy works shall"—or do—"praise thee, O Lord."

I wish now to speak in a general, or introductory way, of the praise which God's works give to him. Then I hope to take up, one by one, the sun, and the moon, and the stars; the air, the light, the clouds, and so on; and try to show some of the ways in which they all praise God.

There are a great many ways in which God's works praise him. I wish now to speak particularly of three of the ways in which this is done.

*In the first place, God's works praise him* BY SHOWING HIS POWER.

Who was the strongest man mentioned in the Bible? Samson. Well now, suppose that I had never heard anything about Samson, and you wanted to make me understand what great strength or power he had; what would you do? Why, you would begin and tell me about some of the wonderful things he had done.

You would say, for instance: "One day Samson was going along the road, and a lion sprang roaring upon him. He had neither sword nor spear, nor weapon of any kind about him. But he seized hold of the lion, and tore his jaws asunder, as easily as you or I could tear a piece of paper in two.

"Another time the Philistines sent a whole regiment of soldiers, one thousand strong, to take him prisoner. They came against him all armed with swords and spears. He had nothing in his hand, not even a staff. But he looked around, and picked up the jawbone of an ass. He attacked them with that,

and never stopped till he had killed the whole of them."

SAMSON'S POWER.

Yes; and you would go on to tell me: "The last thing he did was greater than all the rest. One day

the Philistines, his enemies, were having a great feast in honour of their idol-god, Dagon. They met in a great temple. It was crowded full of people. There were openings in the roof, and the roof was crowded too with people, all eager to get a peep at Samson. They had put his eyes out now, and he was blind. The temple was built in such a way that the principal beams which supported it rested on two huge pillars or columns. Poor blind Samson was led in by a little boy. He stood between those two pillars. There were thousands of people in that temple, and on the roof of it. They were all laughing at Samson, and making fun of him. Presently he took hold of the pillars. He bowed himself, and pulled with all his might. The pillars gave way; the whole building fell. Wild shrieks and cries filled the air; and *three thousand people* lay dead among the ruins."

And thus by telling me of the works of Samson—the things that he did—you would show me his power. And so God's works show his power. Let us look at one or two of these works.

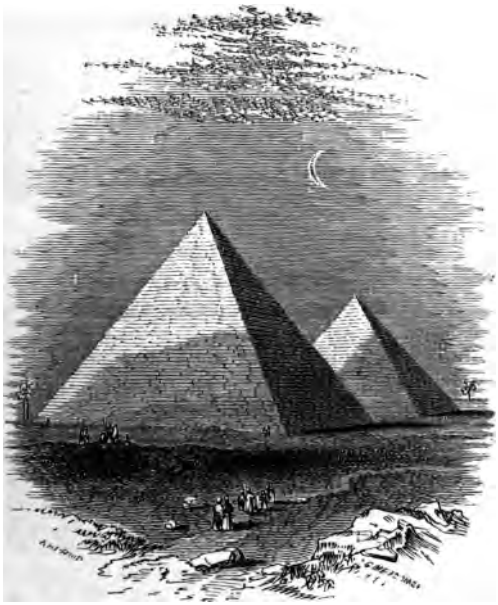
We may begin by looking at a *mountain*. Suppose we take Mont Blanc, in Switzerland. This mountain is about sixteen thousand feet high. Now let us try to get an idea how high this is. Suppose we take an ordinary church steeple, about two hundred feet high. Look to the top of it; see how high it is. Put another such steeple on the top of that; then a third, then a fourth, then a fifth, then a sixth, then a seventh, then an eighth. What a height that is! Yes; but it is only sixteen hundred feet. You've got to go *ten*

*times* as high as that, before you reach the top of the mountain. You must go on piling up steeples till you get ten times eight such steeples standing one on top of the other. How high that would be! And

MONT BLANC.

then suppose from that high point we could bring down a rope in a slanting direction, such as the side of a mountain generally takes, till it reached the earth. Then suppose we go round with that rope, marking off a circle for the base of the mountain, how many miles

would it be round that circle? And if we had to make that mountain, by filling up with solid rock and earth all the space inside of that circle, clear up to that high point at the top of the eighty steeples,



THE GREAT PYRAMID.

how long would it take us? Well, we can tell *about* how long.

We have all heard of the Great Pyramid of Egypt. This is the most like a mountain of anything men have ever made. It is a square or four-sided build-

ing, formed of stone, and running up to a point. It is four hundred feet high, and broad in proportion. But the mountain we are talking about is *forty* times as high as that pyramid.

Yet we are told that when the pyramid was built it took eight hundred thousand men ten years to build it. And according to this rate it would take one hundred thousand men four hundred years to make a mountain like Mont Blanc. But how long did it take God to make it? The Bible tells us that "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. xxxiii. 9). And so Dr. Watts was right when he said, in the simple words of his sweet hymn,—

> "I sing the almighty *power* of God
> That *bade* the mountains rise."

Oh, how wonderful his power must be, who *by a word* can make a mountain! The mountains praise God by showing his power.

And then the *ocean* shows God's power too. When storms burst over it, and set its mighty waves to rolling, how vast their power is! The largest ships are dashed in pieces by them, the strongest works of men are broken to atoms. All the men in the world can do nothing to control those angry waves. Yet they are God's servants. They are all obedient to his will,—

> "And one soft word of his command
> Can sink them silent in the sand."

It was just in the midst of such a storm that Jesus spoke to the wild, foaming billows. He said, "Peace,

"THOSE ANGRY WAVES."

be still. And immediately there was a great calm." The ocean praises God by showing his power.

And then, how wonderfully *our world* shows God's power. You know that the line which runs through

the centre of a round ball is called its diameter. If we measure our Earth through its centre, the diameter of it is about eight thousand miles. The distance round the Earth is about twenty-five thousand miles. How heavy this world must be! Think of all the people in it; the houses, the cities, the countries, the hills, the mountains, the rivers, the oceans. And if anybody should attempt to tell us of the thousands

PROOF OF THE EARTH'S SPHERICAL FORM.

of millions of tons that our globe weighs, we could form no idea of it. All the men in the world never could make a chain strong enough to hang the world upon; and if they had such a chain fastened to our Earth, they never could tell what to do with the other end of it.

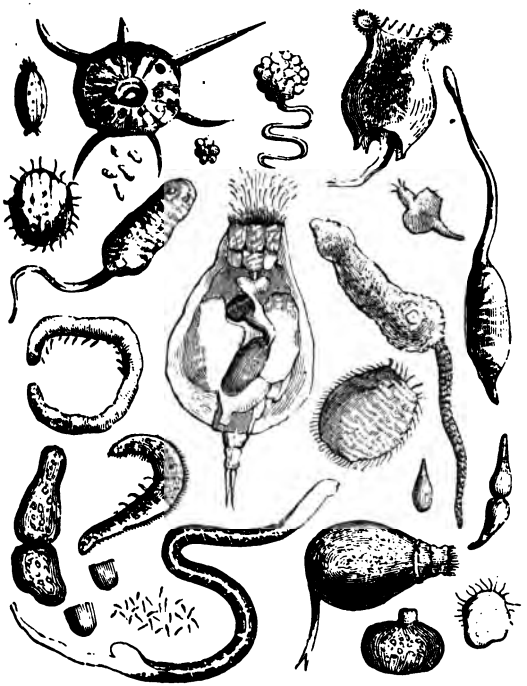
The Hindus used to say that the world is like a great level plain. This plain, they said, rested on the

back of an elephant; the elephant rested on the back of a huge tortoise; but on what the tortoise rested they never could tell. And if we had to support the world, we should find just the same difficulty. We never could tell what to make it stand on. But God has no difficulty in doing this. The Bible tells us that he "hangeth the earth upon *nothing*" (Job xxvi. 7). There is no prop for it to stand on, there is no chain for it to hang from; yet it stays just where God placed it, and moves on in the very path that he has marked for it to go in. And when we think of the mountains rising up at God's command, of the ocean controlled by his word, and the great world in which we live hanging on nothing, as God told it to do, we see how God's works praise him *by showing his power.*

*The second way in which God's works praise him is* BY SHOWING HIS WISDOM.

There is something in everything about us that shows God's wisdom. If we pluck a flower from the garden, or a leaf from a tree, and study it; if we pick up a pebble, an insect, or a grain of wheat, and consider it; or if we dip our finger in a pond, and examine with a microscope the drop of water that hangs from the end of it, we shall find many things connected with it that will speak to us about the wisdom of God.

And if we look at the air we breathe, we shall find a wonderful illustration of God's wisdom in the way in which it is kept fresh and pure, and fit for breathing.



ANIMALCULES IN WATER, AS SEEN THROUGH A MICROSCOPE.

You know that as long as we are alive our bosoms are rising and falling all the time. When we are sitting still in church, when we are walking along the street, when we are working or playing, and even when we are lying on our beds at night fast asleep, this motion is going on all the time. And what is it which makes this motion? It is breath-

ing. In our bosoms there are things called *lungs*. These are like a piece of sponge. They are made up of a great many little bags or cells, all connected with one another. When we breathe, or draw in the air through our nostrils, these little bags are all filled full of air. This causes them to swell out, just as a bladder does when it is filled. And this makes our bosoms rise. But when we breathe the air out of

THE LUNGS.

our lungs again, then all these little bags are emptied. They lie close together, and this makes our bosoms fall again. The difference between a live body and a dead body is, that the one breathes and the other does not. And this breathing is a very important thing. If we stop breathing, we shall die. Yes; and it is not only important that we should keep on breathing, but it is equally important that we should have fresh, pure air to breathe. But while the air is

in our lungs a great change takes place in it. When we breathe it out, it is very different from what it was when we drew it in.

You know that when you have washed your hands and face, or the dinner things, in a basin of clear water, that water is very different from what it was before you washed in it. By washing in that water you have dirtied and spoiled it.

And it is just so with breathing. We spoil the air by breathing it into our lungs. The air does not stay long in our lungs; but it stays long enough to get spoiled. Something good has been taken out of it, and something bad has been put into it, while it was in there. The fact is, that when we breathe the air we poison it.

Suppose that when a church was full of people they were all to be locked in. Suppose that every door were fastened, and every opening and seam were closed up, so that no good air could get in and no bad air could get out; what would happen to all the people in the church? They would all die. Yes; they would have nothing but poisoned air to breathe, and that would kill them.

We all heard about that dreadful accident which took place, not long ago, at the Avondale coal-mine, in the interior of Pennsylvania. More than a hundred men and boys were killed there in a very short time. But there was no explosion to kill those poor miners, as is often the case. There was a fire at that mine, it is true, but the men were not near the fire. They were not burned to death. They died simply

from want of fresh air. They had to breathe the air which had been poisoned by being breathed over and over again; and that poisoned air killed them. You see the mine in which those poor men were working had in it a number of small rooms, two or three hundred feet down in the earth. There was only one entrance to that mine. This is called a shaft. It was a round opening, like a well, that went from the surface of the earth clear down into the mine where the men were working. The only way to get in and out of the mine was by that opening; the only way to get good

THE SHAFT.

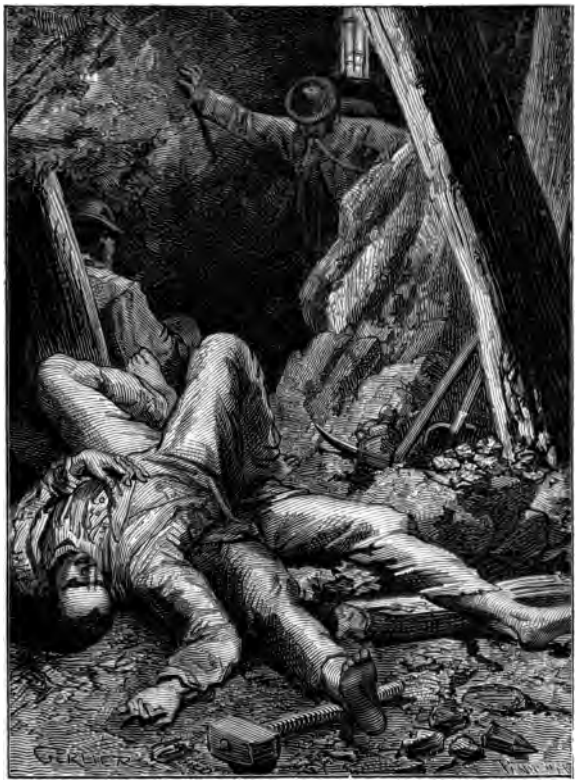
THE COAL-MINE.

air in and bad air out of their mine was by that opening. But in the upper part of that opening there was a good deal of wood-work, and over the mouth of the opening there was a wooden building. Somehow or other that wood-work caught fire. The fire, while it was burning, filled up all the entrance to the mine. No good air could get in, and none of the bad air could get out. The poor fellows were all killed by breathing poisoned air. And when the fire was put out, and fresh air was let into the mine, some workmen from above went down to see if any of the poor men were yet alive.

When they got to the bottom of the mine, they held up their lamps amidst the deep darkness, and looked round. They could see nothing. They called—but there was no answer. They listened—but no sound was heard. They moved cautiously on, with their lamps held up. Presently they entered a room; and what a sight was there! The floor was covered all over with men and boys stretched out upon it. There were more than a hundred of them. No one moved. No one spoke. No one breathed. *They were all dead.* The want of fresh air had killed them.

But if we are poisoning the air all the time by breathing it, it might be thought that we should all be killed. And so we should, if God had not taken great pains to have the poisoned air taken away, and to keep us well supplied with fresh, pure air. And the way in which he does this shows his wisdom.

You know that in a great workshop there are different workmen, or hands, as they are called, employed



MINERS KILLED BY FOUL AIR.

to do different things. One has one thing to attend to all the time, and another has another. But this world is God's great workshop. He has workmen here employed to do just what he wants to have done.

You and I, and all things that breathe, are poisoning the air all the time, and making it unfit for use. But then God has wofkmen employed continually in taking the poison out of the air, and making it pure and good again. There are two sets of God's workmen who attend to this business. One of these sets is made up of the trees, and plants, and flowers, and grass. These, when they are growing, need to have a great deal of that very substance in the air which makes it poisonous to us after we have been breathing it. They take this poison out of the air, and put into it the very thing that it needs to make it wholesome and good for us to use again.

And here we have an illustration of the old proverb which says, "One man's *meat* is another man's *poison*." *We* use the air, and poison it. The trees and plants use this poisoned air, and make it good again. The very thing in this bad air which would be poison to us, is meat and drink to them. And this wonderful change is going on all the time. The animal kingdom is using the air, and poisoning it. The vegetable kingdom is using that same air, and taking the poison out of it. This shows God's wisdom.

But sometimes it happens that the men and animals that breathe the air, and poison it, are in one place, and the trees and plants, with their rustling leaves, for taking the poison out, are in another place, far off from them. Then what is to be done? God has another set of workmen engaged to attend to this matter. These are the winds. He tells them to blow. They sweep over our crowded cities, where there is plenty

of poisoned air, and carry it into the country. There the trees and plants take the poison out of it, and make it good; and then the winds carry it back to the cities again. How wonderful this is!

There is one other little thing about our breathing which shows God's wisdom too, and of which I would say a word or two before leaving this part of our subject. Did you ever notice how differently we breathe the air out of our lungs from the way in which we take it in? In warm weather we do not see the breath as it is breathed out of our nostrils, but in cold frosty weather we see it very plainly. When we draw in our breath, we take it from right before us. But as we breathe it out again, it goes directly down towards our feet. If our nostrils were so placed that we had to breathe this poisoned air straight out before us, then it would be in our way all the time, and when we breathed again, we should be taking in the bad air continually. But God has placed our nostrils in such a position as to send the bad air down, and get it clear out of the way, before we draw in another breath. And so, when you see any one breathing, and notice how the bad breath, as it comes out of the nostrils, is sent down out of the way, let it lead you to think of God, and thank him for his wisdom. The second way in which God's works praise him is *by showing his wisdom.*

*The third way in which God's works praise him is* BY SHOWING HIS GOODNESS.

The Bible tells us that "the earth is *full* of the

goodness of the Lord" (Ps. xxxiii. 5). And if the earth is full of his goodness, then we ought to have no difficulty in finding illustrations of it. But when we begin to look around us, how shall we tell when anything that we are looking at really shows God's goodness? It is easy enough to do this. Everything that we see or meet with that gives us pleasure, and helps to make us feel comfortable and happy, is a proof of God's goodness. And it is so, because it is *his* work. He made it to be as it is. It did not *happen* to be so. Nothing happens. I mean by this that nothing comes by chance. Everything is either ordered by God, or permitted by him. "Not a sparrow can fall to the ground" without his knowledge or permission. And so everything in the world that is beautiful, and helps to give us pleasure or make us happy, is a proof of God's goodness. He might have made everything different from what it is. But he has made things just as they are, on purpose that we might find pleasure and enjoyment in them.

But let us look now for some illustrations of God's goodness in the world around us. Well, to begin with, look up. There is the *sky*. What colour is it? Blue. Is blue a beautiful colour? Yes, there is none more beautiful. On a bright day, after a storm, how pleasant it is to look up to the deep, clear, beautiful blue of the sky. I have sometimes stood and gazed at it till it has made me feel so glad and happy that I have been ready to clap my hands for joy, and say, "Thank God for the beautiful blue sky!" But does the sky just *happen* to be blue? Does it make itself

blue? No, God makes it blue on purpose; because he knows that blue is a colour which it is pleasant for us to look at. It helps to make us happy, and God loves to make his people happy. Suppose that the sky were always of a dull leaden colour, or always "black as sackcloth of hair" (Rev. vi. 12), what a different world this would be! How wretched and miserable it would make us feel! But when we look up to the beautiful blue sky, and remember what pleasure it gives us, we see here how one of God's works praises him, by showing forth his goodness.

Now let us look at *the woods and the fields.* What colour are they? Green. And is green a beautiful colour? Yes; it is one of the most pleasant of all colours for the eye to rest on. When spring first comes, and the new grass springs up from the earth, and the trees of the forest put forth their young leaves, how much pleasure and delight it gives us to look out on the fresh green colour which covers the fields and the woods! Suppose that the grass of the fields and the leaves of the trees were all as white as snow; would that be pleasant to us? No. Whenever the sun shone upon them we should be dazzled and blinded. It would be painful and trying for us to look at them. When we walked through the fields or the woods in the daytime, we should have to shade our eyes in order to keep off the disagreeable glare. A green covering for the earth is pleasant, and shows God's goodness.

But suppose some one should come in here with a question like this: You say it is a proof of God's

goodness that he covers the earth with green instead of white? Yes, certainly it is. But are there not some countries which are covered with white snow all the year round, instead of green grass? Yes.

THE GREEN WOODS.

Well, is God as good in those countries as he is in ours? Yes, just as good. How do you prove it? Easily enough. The countries where snow lies on the ground all the year, have very little sunshine. For six months in the year they have none at all.

It is as dark as midnight then. A covering of snowy whiteness is the best and the pleasantest one for the earth to put on in such places. It proves that God is just as wise and as good in those northern regions of the earth as he is in these milder ones where we live.

But a white covering for the earth would not be suitable for us. We have so much bright sunshine, that we need something to take off its glare. And *green* is the very best colour of all for this. The sky and the earth are the two things of which we see the most. And when we consider how God has covered the sky with blue, and the earth with green—two colours the most pleasant of all for us to look at—we see here how God's works praise him by showing his goodness.

The *gradual way in which the sun rises and sets* is another proof of God's goodness.

When we want to light the gas in our houses, we know what to do. We just get a match; then we turn on the gas, and apply the match, and in a moment we have all the light the gas can give us. When we want to put it out, we just turn the stopper, and in a twinkling, as quickly as you can snap your finger, the light is all gone.

Now God might have made the sun to rise and set just as suddenly as this. Then in the morning we should pass instantly, without a moment's warning, from the darkness of midnight to the brightness of noon. And so in the evening we should be plunged into total darkness in a moment. How painful that

sudden burst of light would be! And what a dreadful inconvenience it would be to have every ray of light taken away so suddenly! Now, we can not only tell to a moment, and even to a second, when the sun will rise and set, but we know also that long before he rises, his light will begin to dawn very gradually upon us; and long after he sets, his gentle beams will linger kindly in the sky, before it becomes quite dark. If we are working out of doors we have time to finish our work, or if we are taking a walk we have time to get home, before night with its darkness overtakes us.

And then, only think how beautiful the sky is when the sun is rising and setting so gradually as he does! How much pleasure and delight multitudes of people find in watching it. But all this would be lost if God had made the sun to rise and set in a moment, just as we light our gas and put it out again. But do you suppose that the sun rises and sets so gradually as it does by chance? No; God ordered it so on purpose. He did it because he knew that it would add to our comfort and happiness. And so every time that we see the gradual rising and setting of the sun, we see a proof of God's goodness; we see one of the ways in which God's works praise him.

And so we might go on to speak of the pleasant sound of the wind as it sighs through the trees,—of the gentle murmur of the brook as it goes babbling by,—of the sweet music of the birds as they sing so charmingly in the woods and groves,—of the way in

which the rain comes down from heaven ; and in everything about us we should see how much there is

THE SETTING SUN.

to prove to us the goodness of God. All God's works praise him by showing his power, his wisdom, and his goodness.

I cannot help quoting here the sweet lines that Montgomery has written on this subject:—

"The God of nature and of grace
In all his works appears;
His goodness through the Earth we trace,
His grandeur in the spheres.

"Behold this fair and fertile globe,
By him in wisdom planned;
'Twas he who girded, like a robe,
The ocean round the land.

"In every stream his bounty flows,
Diffusing joy and wealth;
In every breeze his Spirit blows
The breath of life and health.

"His blessings fall in plenteous showers
Upon the lap of Earth;
That teams with foliage, fruit, and flowers,
And rings with infant mirth.

"If God has made this world so fair,
Where sin and death abound,
How beautiful, beyond compare,
Will paradise be found!"

There is one great lesson we may learn from this subject. It is a very important and a very practical lesson. This is it: *The way to praise God is to do just what he wants us to do.* The angels in heaven praise God in this way. So does the sun. So does the moon. So do the stars; and so do all God's works. And if we wish to praise God, this is the only way in which we can do it. But the one thing, above all others, that God wants us to do, is—to love

Jesus, and serve him. We never can begin to praise God till we do this. But when we really learn to love Him, we shall be praising him all the time. Whether we eat or drink, or work or play, we shall do it all to the glory of God.

See, here is a musical box; but it is quiet. You hear no sound from it. What is the reason that it makes no music? The reason is that it is run down. But suppose we put the key in and wind it up. Now it begins at once to make music. And before we become Christians our hearts are just like musical boxes that are run down. They cannot make any music. But if we bring them to Jesus, and ask him to change them by his grace, he will put them in tune, and wind them up, and they will begin to make sweet music. Then all that we do will please him. We shall be like living musical boxes, and our whole lives will be a song of praise to him!

Remember the one great lesson taught us by this subject:—

THE WAY TO PRAISE GOD IS TO DO JUST WHAT HE WANTS US TO DO.

II.

# How the Sun Praises God.

"Praise ye Him, sun and moon."—Ps. cxlviii. 3.

IN our last sermon we were talking about some of the ways in which all God's works praise him. We are now going to take up some of God's works, one by one, and show the different ways in which they praise him.

We begin with the Sun. This is one of the greatest and most glorious of God's works with which we are acquainted. It is a grand sight to see it rise in the morning. The darkness of night is driven away before it; and light and beauty are shed over all the world at its rising.

In old times, before the Bible was written, when people looked at the Sun, and saw how bright and glorious it was, they thought it must be the home of God. Then, from thinking of it as the place where God dwelt, they began to think that the Sun itself must be God. They worshipped it as God. This

was the first form of idolatry. And we can hardly wonder at this. For, if we had no Bible to teach us better, if there were no one to tell us about the God of heaven, who made all things, when we saw the Sun rising and setting in so much glory and beauty day

SUNRISE.

by day, it would not be very difficult to persuade us that the Sun must be God, and to lead us to worship it. And if we knew nothing about God, and wanted to have something to worship, it would be better to make a god of the Sun, and to worship it, than to bow down to ugly idols made out of wood or stone, or to make a god of a cow, or a crocodile, or a serpent, or a monkey.

But the Sun is not a god. It is only one of God's works. It is one of God's servants.

There is a good story told about a certain missionary and the Sun. He was talking one day with a heathen man.

The man said to the missionary: "I go to the place where you worship, but I see nothing of your God. If you come to my temple, I will show you there the god that I worship: but I never see your God. Why don't you show him to me?"

"Come here," said the missionary, stepping out of the house into the open air. It was noon-day, and the Sun was shining with great power. The missionary pointed up to it, and said to the heathen: "Look at yonder Sun." He tried to look at it for a moment; but he instantly turned away his face, and covered his eyes with his hands. "I can't look at that," said he; "it blinds me."

"Well," said the missionary, "that Sun is only one of the servants of my God. He stands on the outside of his palace. If you can't bear to look at one of his servants, how can you expect to see the Master of that servant, the great God who made him? It would kill you to look at him. No sinful man can see God, in this world, and live."

God made the Sun to praise him. Our sermon to-day is about the way in which this is done. I wish to speak of two ways in which the Sun praises God.

*In the first place, the Sun praises God*—BY WHAT IT IS.

The Sun is like the father of a family with his children gathered round him. You know that whatever part of the Earth you go to, you find that God has set people together in families. The father is the head, or centre of the family, and the children are supported and guided by him. And a Christian family, in which all the members love one another, and are trying to serve and please God, is one of the pleasantest sights to be seen in this world. It is more like heaven than anything else we know of. And, indeed, heaven itself is spoken of in the Bible as a great family (Eph. iii. 15). And all the worlds that God has made, and hung up in the sky, he has put together in companies, or groups, like families, just as he has put together the people who live on our Earth. And every one of these families of worlds has a great Sun in the centre of it. And the worlds belonging to that Sun move round it, just as the children of a family gather round their father.

Suppose it is night—a clear, bright night. We go out of doors and look up to the sky. What a great number of stars we see shining there! Well, every one of those twinkling stars is a sun, like that which shines so brightly on us every day. Some of them are a great deal larger than our Sun. Every one of them is like the father of a family of worlds. But they are so far away from us, that we cannot see the worlds belonging to them. In a family of people the children sometimes grow to be as big as their father; but in a family of worlds the Sun is always a great many times larger than the worlds that move round

it. And this is the reason why we can see those far-off suns, shining in our sky as stars, when we cannot see one of the worlds around them.

But now we are to speak about that family of worlds to which our Earth belongs, and about our Sun, which is like a father in the midst of his family, having his children all gathered round him.

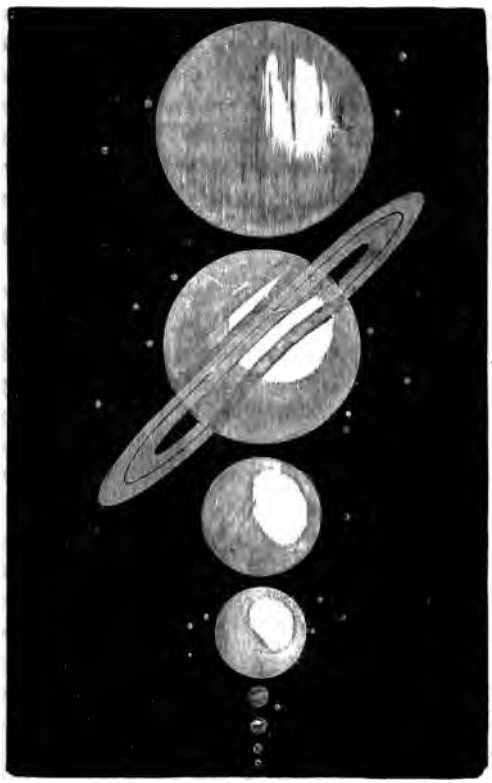
See, here is a machine called an *Orrery*. It is intended to illustrate to us the very point of which we are now speaking, — namely, *what the Sun is*. It is also intended to illustrate another point of which we shall speak presently, namely, *what the Sun does*. This machine is called an *orrery*. And if you ask what is the meaning of this name, or why it is called an orrery, I will tell you.

AN ORRERY.

This machine was invented in the year 1700. The man who invented it was a poor man. He had no money to buy the materials out of which the machine was to be made; but he had a kind friend in a certain nobleman, who gave him as much money as he needed to finish the machine. This nobleman was

the Earl of Orrery; and out of gratitude to him the inventor of the machine called it an orrery. The large ball in the centre of this machine represents the Sun. The smaller balls represent the different worlds that make up that system or family of worlds to which our Earth belongs. These worlds are moving round the Sun all the time. And as they thus move they are like the children of a family clustering round their father.

Let us look for a moment at the different worlds in this family to which we belong, and say a word about their names and sizes. The smallest one, and nearest to the Sun, is named Vulcan. He has only lately been discovered, and we know very little about him. He is not represented in our orrery. The second world in our family nearest the Sun is Mercury; the third is Venus; the fourth is our Earth; the next, outside of us—the fifth in our family—is called Mars; the sixth is Jupiter; the seventh is Saturn; the eighth is Uranus; and the ninth—the outside one, the furthest off from the Sun—is Neptune. You notice that these names are all the names of males except one, namely, Venus. So that we have seven brothers and one sister in our family of worlds. But you may ask,—What is our own world? Are we a brother, or a sister? We don't know what people in the other worlds call us, but in old times the Romans used to represent our Earth as a female, whom they called Terra, or Tellus. So I suppose we must call ourselves a sister to the other worlds. And thus we see our Sun is the father of a large family of




COMPARATIVE SIZE OF THE PLANETS.

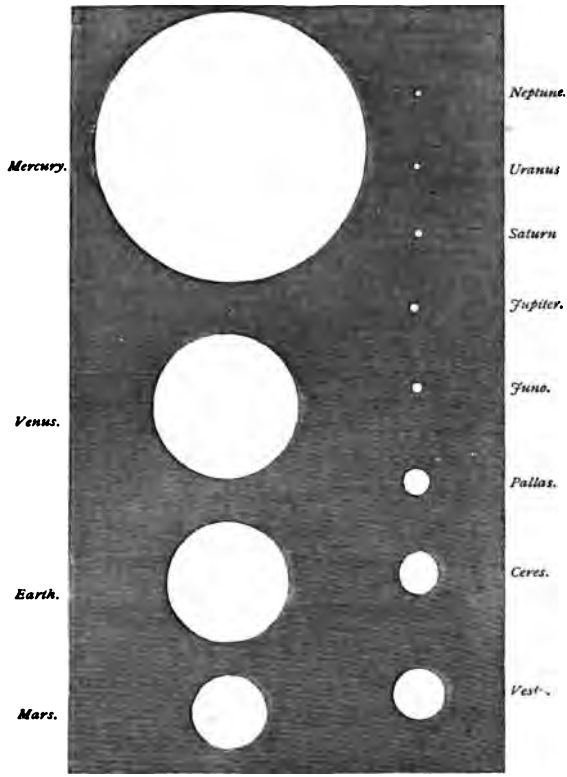
worlds. There are seven brothers and two sisters in this family.

I ought to say here, that in addition to these nine big boy and girl worlds, our father, the Sun, has a

great lot of little tiny worlds. There are eighty or ninety of them. These are all found between our brothers Mars and Jupiter; but they are so little—such mere baby worlds—that it is not worth while to say much about them. Only, they belong to our family, and we ought not to forget them.

There are only four of these members of our family that we can see with our naked eyes, or without the use of a telescope. These are Venus, our beautiful sister; Mars; and our big brothers, Jupiter and Saturn. Sometimes we can see them as morning stars, shining in the east, before the Sun rises; and sometimes, as evening stars, they are seen shining beautifully in the west, after the Sun has set. Once in a while we can just get a peep at Mercury; but he keeps so close to the Sun that it is hard to see him.

And when you look up to the sky at night, you will want to know which of those shining stars that you see belong to our family. It is very easy to tell this. Suppose, for instance, there is a bright star. Look at it. Does it twinkle? Yes. Then it does not belong to our family. There is another. Does that twinkle? No. It shines with a clear, steady light, just like the moon. Then that belongs to our family. Our family of worlds are called Planets. This name comes from a word which means *to wander;* and the worlds belonging to our family have this name because they are wandering or moving about all the time. The other stars are called *fixed stars*, because they are always in the same place.

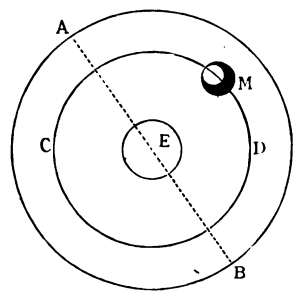



APPARENT SIZES OF THE SUN AS SEEN FROM VARIOUS PLANETS.

Now we have seen that our Sun is the father, or centre, of a family of worlds. But we want to know what sort of a world the Sun is. There is only time now to speak of two things about it.

It is a very *large* world. We think our world is pretty large. We know that its diameter—that is, a line drawn right through the centre of it—measures more than eight thousand miles. But the Sun is more than a hundred times larger than this. The diameter of the Sun, or a line drawn through its centre, would measure more than eight hundred and eighty thousand miles. This is so large a world that we can hardly form any idea of it.*

But let us take an illustration, that may help us in thinking how large the Sun is. Suppose we had a ball, or globe, as big as the Sun is, but with the inside all hollow. Let the circle A B represent this globe. A line drawn through it, from A to B, is, we will just suppose, like the diameter of the Sun, more than eight hundred and eighty thousand miles long. Now, right in the centre of this empty globe let us put our own Earth. We may suppose that the ball E stands for our Earth. Remember, it is more than eight thousand miles in diameter. Now, let us bring the moon into the great empty globe too. Do you know how far the moon is from the Earth? It is two hundred




* The diameter of the Sun is towards a million of miles; or, more exactly, it is eight hundred and eighty-five thousand miles. One hundred and twelve bodies as large as the Earth, lying side by side, would be required to reach across the solar disc.—OLMSTED.

and forty thousand miles. Well, let us set the moon that distance from the Earth. The little ball marked M stands for the moon. Suppose it goes round the Earth in the circle marked C D. Well, the Sun is so large that it could take our Earth in the centre, and let the moon go round it, in a line two hundred and forty thousand miles from it, without touching the outside of the Sun. The Sun is said by astronomers to be a million and a half times larger than our Earth. What a very large world the Sun must be!

But it is *a very solid, heavy world*, too, as well as a very large one. Now, suppose we try to weigh the Sun, and find out how heavy it is. You may think that this is a very hard thing to do. But it can be done. Well, suppose we have here an immense pair of scales. Suppose they are big enough for us to put the Sun in one of the scales. These scales are so large, and so heavy, that nobody could hold them up but God himself. We will suppose God holds the beam in his own hand. Well, there is the Sun in the scale on one side. Now what shall we put into the scale on the other side, for weights? We must put worlds in as large and heavy as this on which we live. How many such worlds shall we need to balance the Sun? Put ten such worlds in. Put ten times ten in. This makes a hundred. Put ten times a hundred in. This makes a thousand. Put ten—twenty—fifty thousand in. Put a hundred thousand in. Put two hundred thousand in. Put three hundred thousand in. Put fifty thousand more in. Now, we have three hundred and fifty thousand worlds like ours in

the other scale. And now, look, the scale just begins to turn. The beam stands even. The Sun is so large, and so heavy, that it weighs as much as three hundred and fifty thousand worlds like ours. And yet God hangs the great Sun on nothing. Oh, how wonderful the power of God is! The Sun shows His power. And thus the Sun praises God, in the first place, *by what it is.*

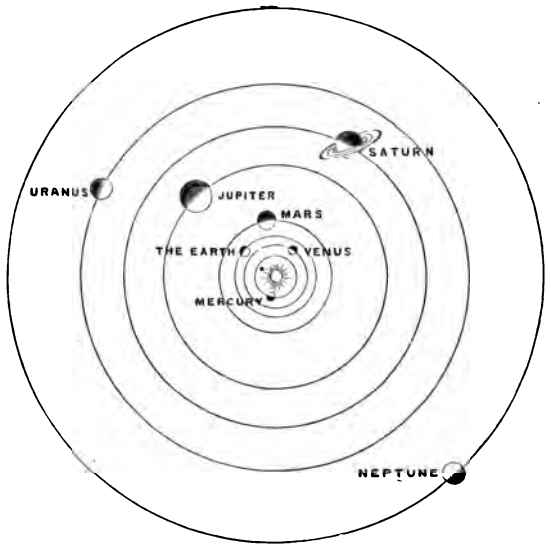
*But, in the second place, the Sun praises God*—BY WHAT IT DOES.

In speaking of what the Sun does, all we have to say may be said under two words, namely, *governing* and *giving.*

The Sun is a *great governor*, and by what he does in this way he praises God. A good father always governs his children well. And the better children are governed, the happier and more useful they will be. And the Sun is like a good father in this respect. These different worlds about him are like his children; and he governs them well. He keeps them all in just the places that God wants them to be in; and at the same time he keeps them all going round, each in his own path, just as God wants them to do.

Let us look again at our orrery. Here you see that each ball, representing a world, is held in its place by a brass rod. If these rods were broken, the balls attached to them would all fall to the ground. These balls can only be kept in motion by turning the machinery inside of the orrery. But there are no rods stretching out from the Sun to the worlds

around him, to hold them in their places. There is no machinery in the Sun, that needs winding and turning, to keep the worlds of our family in motion.




THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

God gave the Sun power to hold all these worlds about him in their proper places, and to keep them in motion all the time, wheeling around him at a wonderful rate. No one ever saw this power. No one but God knows what it is. Men call it *gravitation;* but no one knows what gravitation is. The Sun has kept these worlds in motion for thousands of years, without ever stopping for a single moment

night or day. And it is wonderful indeed how fast these great worlds move. We think it very rapid motion when we see a locomotive flying along at the rate of a mile a minute, or sixty miles an hour; but our great solid Earth—with all its mountains, and oceans, and continents—is flying round the Sun more than a thousand times faster than such a locomotive. Our world travels all the time at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour. If we had a train which could travel as fast as this, we could go from New York to San Francisco, and back again, about eight or nine times in an hour. And yet, though our Earth is rushing on all the time at such a rate, the Sun governs it so well that it never gets off the track, is never out of place, and never behind time. How wonderful this is! And when we think how well the Sun governs the great family of worlds about him, we can truly say that he praises God by what he does. The Sun is a great governor, and in this way he praises God.

But the Sun is a *great giver*, as well as a great governor; and in this way too he praises God. How many things the Sun gives us! We shall only mention four. The Sun gives us *light*. All the light we have by day comes from the Sun. Without him our world would be very dark. And all the light we have by night, too, except the little that comes from the stars, we owe to the Sun. When the moon shines, so softly, all her light comes from the Sun.

You light a candle. There are sunbeams, which you cannot see, in the tallow and in the wick. They are

bound there in those materials, and as fast as they are let loose they give light. You light a lamp. There are sunbeams dissolved in the oil which fills the lamp. It is these sunbeams which make the flame of the lamp. You turn on the gas, and light it; but the gas is only sunbeams turned into air. It is the sunbeams which make the gas burn so brightly. You strike together a piece of flint and steel. It makes a spark. That spark is a piece of a sunbeam. It was hidden in the flint and the steel. When you strike them together, the blow knocks the sunbeam out. Lucifer matches are made principally out of sunbeams; and when you rub one over something rough, like sand-paper, it lets the sunbeams out, and that makes the light. If it were not for the sunbeams stowed away in them, none of these things would be able to give us any light.

But the Sun gives us *heat*, as well as light. How pleasant it is, on a cold chilly morning, after the Sun begins to shine, to get into his nice, warm beams! When men go up towards the North Pole in winter, they have no Sun for six months. Then the rivers freeze into solid ice. Even the salt sea freezes. Everything freezes. And if it were not for the Sun it would be the same all over our Earth. Not only the rivers, but the ocean too, would turn to solid ice, and every living thing in the world would die. When you find heat in any place, or thing, you may be sure that the Sun has been at work there. All the heat in the world, anywhere, is owing to the Sun. You know how warm the blood is that flows through our bodies.

There are sunbeams in the blood, and this is what makes it so warm. You sit down by a blazing wood-fire on a cold winter night, and find it very pleasant and comfortable; but every stick of wood you throw on the fire has a lot of sunbeams packed away in it. When the tree was growing, to which that stick of wood once belonged, the leaves of that tree used to spend all the bright days of summer in catching sunbeams, and stowing them away in the limbs of the tree. When you cast that stick into the fire, the sunbeams confined in it are set free, and it is this that makes the blaze of the fire. Every lump of coal you throw into the grate has a lot of sunbeams packed away in it, and it is these that make the fire so warm. When you cover yourself with the blankets and quilt in your bed at night, and feel so snug and warm, there are sunbeams hidden away in those clothes, and it is to these you owe your warmth and comfort. What a great giver the Sun is!

But in addition to light and heat, the Sun gives *fertility* also.

Some of you may ask,—What is the meaning of *fertility?* It means the power to make things grow. You know what a wonderful power of this sort the Earth has. Think how the grass springs up and grows everywhere. Think how the grain grows in the fields from the seed which the farmer sows there. Think how the plants and flowers grow in the gardens, and the giant trees in the parks and mighty forests. You can hardly find a spot of ground any-

where but something is growing on it. Why, if you look even to the sides and surface of the hard rocks, you will see them covered over with the beautiful soft moss and the lichens that grow there. But wherever you see anything of this kind growing, you may know that the Sun has been at work there. It is the Sun which gives to the Earth its fertility, or its power to make things grow. If it were not for the Sun we should have no trees, no plants, no grain, no flowers, no grass. The whole Earth would be a barren desert, where not one green thing could be seen, and nothing beautiful would grow. If it were not for the Sun there would be no rain and no dew, no moisture and no warmth. It is the Sun that gives us these, and it is these that make things grow. So that every green thing that grows—from the largest tree to the tiniest flower or the least blade of grass —shows how the Sun praises God by what it does. The Sun gives fertility to the Earth, and by doing this it praises God.

But in addition to light, and heat, and fertility, the Sun gives *beauty* also, and by doing this he praises God. How beautiful the fields look in the fresh green of early spring! But it is the Sun which gives to the fields all that beauty. How beautiful the gardens look when the daisies, and the violets, and the tulips, and the lilies, and the roses, and all the lovely flowers are blooming there! But it is the Sun which gives to the flowers all their beauty. How beautiful the trees of the forest look, when their bright green leaves are fluttering in the breeze,

and making sweet music as the wind sweeps through them! But it is the Sun which gives to the trees of the forest all their beauty. How beautiful the clouds look, as they float in the sky, some of them

SUNSHINE.

appearing like great banks of snow, and some covered all over with purple and gold! But it is the Sun which gives to the clouds all their beauty. How beautiful the faces of happy children look, with their bright eyes sparkling like diamonds, and their cheeks

blooming like roses! But it is the Sun which gives to those eyes their brightness, and to those cheeks their rosy bloom. And when we think what a great governor and what a great giver the Sun is,—when we think of the light, and heat, and fertility, and beauty that he gives,—we see how true it is that the Sun praises God *by what he does.*

Now, there are *two* lessons the Sun teaches us, in what has been said about him. One is *a lesson of obedience;* the other is *a lesson of trust.*

*We may learn a lesson of obedience from the Sun.* The Sun obeys God *always, in everything.* As soon as God made it, he set it to work to govern the worlds about it,—to hold them in their places, to keep them in motion, and to give them the light and heat, the fertility and beauty, that they need. And he has been doing this all the time,—for thousands of years. He never gets tired, and never stops. If we could only learn to obey God in the same way that the Sun does, what a blessed thing it would be for us! Let me tell you a story to show the benefit of this kind of obedience.

You know what a switch is on a railway. It is a long piece of the iron rail fixed on a pivot, and tapering off at the end, so as to turn the carriages from one line of rails to another. In some places there are men employed, all the time, to attend to these switches, and keep them right. If they are not attended to, a whole train of carriages may be thrown from the track, and many lives be lost. The

men who watch them are called switch-tenders. On a railroad in Prussia, not long ago, a switch-tender was taking his place in order to turn a train, that was coming in sight, on to a different track. This was necessary to prevent it from dashing against another train that was coming in the opposite direction. Just at that moment he saw his little boy playing on the track along which the train was about to pass. What could he do? His first thought was to rush towards his child, and snatch him from that dangerous place. But he could not do that and get back to the switch in time. Then there would be a collision, and perhaps a hundred lives or more would be lost. Oh, what agony filled that father's heart at that trying moment! But, quick as thought, he resolved to do his duty by attending to the switch first, whatever might happen. So he turned the switch, and then cried out to his little boy,—"Lie down! lie down!" The boy had learned to obey at once, just as the Sun does. Instantly he stretched himself along the ground, between the rails. The heavy train went thundering over him. The passengers, sitting quietly in the train, knew nothing of the agony that was filling that loving father's heart. The moment the train was past, he rushed to where his boy lay. He was afraid that he would find nothing but his mangled, bleeding body. But, to his great delight and joy, he found him alive and unhurt! *The boy's ready obedience had saved him.*

But how can we learn to obey God in this way? Our hearts are full of sin. This makes a great

difference between the Sun and us. The Sun has never sinned. Our sins make it hard for us to obey God. Unless we pray earnestly to Jesus to help us, we shall never learn to obey him as the Sun does.

Let me tell you about the way in which a little girl learned to obey God. She called to her mother once and said, "Oh, mother, how hard it is to learn to obey God! I don't believe I ever shall be able."

"Have you really tried, my dear?" asked her mother.

"Oh yes, indeed; I try every day. When I wake in the morning, before I get up I say to myself, 'Now, I will be good all day: I'll obey my parents and teachers, I won't get cross, and I'll tell the truth.' But, I don't know how it is, I soon forget this; and then, when evening comes, I have to say, 'There, now! what's the use of trying? I've been in a passion; I've been disobedient;'—and once or twice, mother, you know, I've said what was not true."

The dear child seemed really very much distressed; and her mother looked kindly at her and said, "My dear, I think you have not begun right." The little girl looked up in wonder; and her mother went on to say, "The first thing is to have a new heart. Have you prayed earnestly for that?"

"No, mother, I am afraid not."

"Then, my child, do so at once," said her mother. "Good fruit, you know, can only come from a good tree. If your heart is wrong, your conduct will be wrong. You cannot make it right yourself, with all your good resolutions. But ask God, for Jesus'

sake, to help you. He will give you his Holy Spirit, and then you will find it easy to obey him."

This little girl took her mother's advice. That very day she asked God to change her heart. She prayed, and watched, and strove against her sins; and, with God's help, she soon became remarkable

THE SUN A TEACHER OF OBEDIENCE.

for her loving obedience to the Divine will. The Sun teaches us a lesson of obedience.

*But the Sun teaches us a lesson of trust*, as well as of obedience.

You have all heard about Martin Luther, the great reformer. He had a wonderful work to do in trying to set men free from the errors taught by the

Church of Rome. Luther had a great many enemies, who wanted to hinder his work and to kill him. Sometimes his friends were very much afraid that he would be killed, and his work stopped; but Luther himself was always calm and cheerful. He never felt afraid. One day some of his friends, who were in great fear, asked him how it was that he never seemed to be afraid. Luther said, "Why should I be afraid? I have two miracles to look at all the time, and they always speak to me about trust in God. In the daytime I look up to the sky; there I see the clouds sailing through the air, and the great Sun beyond them. These have no chain to keep them in their places, and yet they never fall. At night I look up to the sky again, and I see it all spangled over with stars. There are no pillars to hold up the sky, and yet it never falls. And then I think that He who keeps the Sun, and the stars, and the clouds in their places, can do all things. He can take care of me and my work. So why should I be afraid? I have nothing to do but trust him, and do my duty."

How beautiful this is! But you and I have just those same two miracles to look at. They should teach us to trust God, as they taught Luther. The same Sun that Luther saw is still shining for us every day. The same starry sky that was over his head at night, is over ours. It has never fallen. Oh, then, when we look on the Sun by day, and the moon and stars by night, let us learn from them these two lessons—*how to obey God*, and *how to trust God.*

III.

# How the Moon Praises God.

"Praise ye Him, sun and moon."—Ps. cxlviii. 3.

WE have spoken before on this text. We have tried to point out two ways in which the Sun praises God. In the first place, it praises God by *what it is;* and in the second place, by *what it does.* And now we have done with the Sun for the present.

In our text David says, "Praise ye him, sun and *moon.*" So we turn now to speak about *the ways in which the moon praises God.*

The moon is the nearest neighbour we have, among all the worlds that are round about us. We may say, in round numbers, that it is about two hundred and forty thousand miles distant from us. This is a good way off for a neighbour to live. Suppose we wanted to go and make a friendly call on our neighbour the moon. Suppose there were a railway running from our Earth to the moon. If we could get into a train that would

THE EARTH AS IT WOULD APPEAR TO AN INHABITANT OF THE MOON.

travel night and day, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, it would take us nearly a whole year to get there; and, of course, as long to get back. *Two years*

is a good while to spend in making a call on our nearest neighbour.

The moon is a good deal smaller than our Earth. The diameter of the moon is only a little more than a quarter of the diameter of the Earth.

The moon is very slow in its motions. You know our day and night are caused by the Earth turning round on its axis, or the line that runs through it. It takes our Earth just twenty-four hours, or a day and a night, to make this turn or revolution. But the moon, although it is so much smaller, takes about twenty-eight days to turn round on its axis. A day in the moon is about as long as a month with us. Only think of going to bed in the moon, and having to sleep on through a night fourteen times as long as one of ours! What a good time *sleepy-heads* must have in the moon! Yes, they have a good time at night; but when the sun rises, and they begin a day that must last fourteen times as long as one of ours, then we may well pity the sleepy-heads and lazy folks in the moon, if any such are there.

It has always been a curious question to know whether the moon is inhabited or not. No one can answer this question with any certainty. We only see one side of the moon. You can easily see how this is. Suppose I hold out my arm, with the palm of the hand towards my face, and then turn round; of course my hand will turn round just as fast as my face. If I should keep turning round for a hundred years in this way, I should never see but one side of my hand. And this is the way in which our Earth

and the moon keep turning round together. On the side of the moon which we see there is no atmosphere, or body of air, like that which surrounds our globe. On this account some people think there are no inhabitants there. But it has been found out

TELESCOPIC APPEARANCE OF FULL MOON.

lately, in a curious way which I cannot stop now to explain, that the other side of the moon is very different from the side that we see, and that there may be an atmosphere on that side, and people living there.

Another very curious thing about the moon is, that

things there are supposed to weigh about six times less than they do here. Here, for instance, is a good stout boy. We put him in the scales and weigh him; he weighs just sixty pounds. Well, if we could take that boy to the moon he would only weigh ten pounds. The last time I stood on a pair of scales I weighed one hundred and fifty pounds. If I could go to the moon and be weighed, I should weigh just twenty-five pounds. That is about as much as one of these dear little infant-scholars weighs. How strange this seems!

But now let us begin to talk about the ways in which the moon praises God. We are to speak of three of these.

*In the first place, the moon praises God*—BY ITS PUNCTUALITY.

Suppose you are going to make a journey to the Falls of Niagara. A family-party is to be made up; and your father says you can go any time in the month of June. You all consult together to find out which will be the best week in June to go. Your mother says, "By all means let us go so as to be there at the time of the full moon. Then we shall get a view of the falls by moonlight; and perhaps we shall see a lunar rainbow." Then you get out your almanacs, and find out when there will be full moon in the month of June. And if the almanac says that the moon will be full on the 23rd of June, then you arrange your plans for the journey so as to be at Niagara about that time. You arrive there

safely; and in the evening of that day your party all leave the hotel where you are staying, and go down to look at the falls. You get out on the top of the tower on the Terrapin Rocks, where you can look right down into the Horse-shoe Fall.

But would it ever enter into your mind to think that perhaps the moon will be behind time? Perhaps something may have delayed it for two or three days? Would you be likely to think anything of this kind? No; such a thought never enters into anybody's mind. And what is the reason? The reason is, that such a thing has never happened. The moon has been going through all the changes that we see in it now, every month, for nearly six thousand years, and in all that long time it has never once been a single day, or hour, or minute, behind time, or before time! The *new* moon comes punctually at the time appointed for it; and so does the *full* moon. An astronomer can calculate for a hundred, or five hundred years ahead, and tell you just the day and hour, in any month, when there will be a new moon or a full moon. And if you and I were to be alive at that time, we should find the moon up to time—*punctual to a moment.* It has been so for thousands of years past, it will be so for thousands of years to come.

When the time comes for you to take such a journey to Niagara as was spoken of just now, *you* may, perhaps, oversleep yourself in the morning, and so miss the train. Or you may be sick, and not able to go. Or you may get fairly started, and some accident may happen to the train, and you may be

delayed in getting to the end of your journey. But whoever may be at Niagara at the time appointed for the full moon, in next June, may be just as sure that the moon will really *be* full then, as they are that two and two make four. The moon always *has been* punctual, and always *will be* punctual. And the moon praises God by its punctuality. It is God's power and wisdom that makes the moon so punctual.

The best watchmaker in the world cannot make a clock or watch that will go on from year to year without getting either too fast or too slow. But the moon is God's time-piece. It keeps the most exact time. It is never too fast, and never too slow, and never needs winding up. And every month when we see the new moon appear, at the very time that God has appointed for it, we may well think that it is singing a silent song of praise to God by its punctuality.

And this is a very important lesson that we may learn from the moon.

The habit of punctuality is one of the best habits for us to form while we are young. To be always in the right place at the right time—to be in school before the opening exercises begin—to be in church before the minister enters on the service—to be in the place where we have a business engagement, in plenty of time to meet it—is a most excellent habit to form. Many a man has failed in business just for the want of punctuality. And even when actual failure does not follow from it, it always occasions a great deal of harm and loss.

One day a gentleman was stopped in the street by a shabby-looking man, who asked him if he did not remember his old schoolmate, Harry Brown? and then begged him to lend him five dollars.

The gentleman remembered Harry very well. His father was a rich man. And when he was at school Harry's business prospects were better than those of any boy in his class.

He looked with surprise on this man's dirty, threadbare clothes, and asked, "Can it be possible that you are my old friend Harry Brown?"

"It is just so," said he.

"Do tell me what has brought you to this condition of poverty and want?"

Now mark what this poor man said.

"'*Time enough yet*' has brought me here. I got into the way of saying this all the time. I used always to put off doing things at the right time. *That has ruined me.* If I had only formed the habit of punctuality when I was young, I might have been a rich man to-day. But now the habit of putting everything off has become so strong, that it seems impossible to overcome it. For the sake of old times lend me five dollars; or else I must either go to the workhouse or starve."

If any of you are getting into the habit of putting things off by saying "Time enough yet," resolve to break it up at once; and every month, as you see the new moon, think what a habit of punctuality the moon has, and try to imitate its example in this respect.

Some of the best and greatest men of whom we

read in history were remarkable for their punctuality. Melancthon, the friend and companion of Martin Luther, the great reformer, was so punctual in his habits that if he made a business engagement, he was accustomed to fix not only the hour, but the very *minute* when the business should be attended to.

The great and good General Washington was a pattern of punctuality. When he engaged to meet Congress at noon, he never failed to be at the door of the hall just as the clock was striking twelve.

He always dined at four o'clock, and if his guests whom he had invited were not present, the dinner went on, punctually at the appointed hour, without waiting for them. Sometimes, when new members of Congress were invited to dine with the president, not knowing what his habit was in this respect, they would come late, perhaps when dinner was half over. Washington would make no apology, but simply remark, "Gentlemen, we are *punctual* here."

When those gentlemen got another invitation to dine with the president, they would be sure to be in time.

On one occasion a person had a pair of beautiful horses which he wanted to sell, and the president wanted to buy. Five o'clock in the morning of a certain day was appointed for Washington to see them. But the horses did not appear till a quarter past five. When the man came with them, he was told that the president had been at the hour appointed, but finding he was not there, had gone to some other engagement. He could not then be seen. The man lost a good chance to sell his horses by delaying a quarter of an

hour. Let us learn this lesson from the moon—always to be up to time.

The first way in which the moon praises God *is by its punctuality.*

*The second way in which the moon praises God is* —BY ITS BEAUTY.

The moon is one of the most beautiful things connected with our world. When we see it rise up from the horizon, with its full round face, looking just as if it were pouring a flood of liquid silver on the clouds that are trying to hide it, and then go sailing calmly on through the clear, dark sky, scattering brightness and beauty everywhere, how charming a sight it is! From the beginning of the world the moon has always been looked on as an object of great interest and beauty. The ancients used to call her "The Queen of Heaven." They worshipped the moon as a goddess. Nor can we wonder that they should do this, when they had no Bible to teach them better.

And every time that we see the moon, as Job says, "walking in brightness" (Job xxxi. 26), we should think of the goodness and power of God in appointing the moon to give light in the night season, and to spread around so much beauty in our dark world. This is what Addison means in the words of the hymn, when he says:—

> "Soon as the evening shades prevail,
> The Moon takes up the wondrous tale,
> And nightly, to the listening Earth,
> Repeats the story of her birth."

THE BEAUTY OF THE MOON.

And it is a curious and instructive thing to inquire what it is that makes the moon so beautiful. All the beauty of the moon is owing to its shining. And *how* does the moon shine? Is it by its *own* light? No; it has no light of its own. The moon shines by reflecting, or giving away to us the light which it receives from the sun. You know when you hold a piece of a looking-glass in the sunshine how it will cause a bright light to dance about on the opposite wall, just as you happen to move the piece of glass. There is no light in the glass. It only reflects, or throws back, the light which comes to it from the sun. And this is just what the moon does when it shines. It catches the beams of light which it receives from the sun, and throws them down to us. The moon is a great giver, and *she owes all her beauty to this habit of giving.* Suppose the moon should swallow up and keep to itself all the rays of light which the sun gives it, and should refuse to give them to us, what would the effect be? It would stop shining. And the moment it stopped shining it would lose all its beauty. You remember when we were talking about the jewels of the Bible, we found out that it was just the same with the diamond. All the beauty or the brilliance of the diamond is owing to its reflecting, or giving away, the light which it receives from the sun. And this is the way with the moon. If it should stop shining, or giving away the light which it gets from the sun, it would hang up in the sky a great black, ugly-looking ball. All its brightness and beauty would be gone.

And what do we learn from this? Why, we learn that it is our duty to make ourselves beautiful. And the best way in the world to do this is by trying to be like Jesus. When we become Christians we learn to love Jesus. We try to be like him. We learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart; and there is nothing in the world that will so help to make us beautiful as this. The moon hangs in the sky, and becomes as much like the sun as it can, by reflecting the light which the sun gives it; and this makes the moon beautiful. And just so when we become Christians; we learn to know about Jesus, to love him, and become like him. And when we do this we are reflecting the light which Jesus gives us; and this will make us beautiful. No matter what the colour of our hair or eyes may be; no matter what sort of a nose, or lips, or chin, or cheeks we may have; if we are only true Christians, we shall have the love of Jesus in our hearts, and this will make us humble, and meek, and gentle, and loving, and kind: and if we have this spirit in our hearts it will shine out in our faces and eyes, and make us look beautiful in spite of everything.

A person without true religion, or without the love of Jesus in his heart, is like a house in a dark night that has no light inside of it. No matter how large or how fine the house is, it looks cheerless and dark. But a person who has true religion, who really loves Jesus, and is trying to be like him, is like a house at night that is illuminated, or lighted up from top to bottom. No matter whether that house be old or

new, handsome or ugly, the brightness that is lighting it up inside, and streaming fully through every window, makes that house look beautiful in spite of everything.

When Moses was forty days upon Mount Sinai, he was talking with Jesus all the time. And he learned to love him so much, and became so much like him while he was there, that when he came down his face was so bright and beautiful, and shone so like the sun, that it dazzled the eyes of the people to look at him, and he was obliged to put a veil over his face when he talked to the people.

Arrangements had been made in a Christian family to go a-Maying on a particular day in that month. Julia, a little girl in this family, woke in the morning of this day, and heard the sound of rain. "There!" she said; "it's always so when *I* want to go anywhere. My pleasure is *always* spoiled just so." Then she jumped out of bed with a face quite as cloudy as the sky. During all the forenoon she was as sour and cross to her parents as if they had brought the heavy rain on purpose to tease and vex her. "She wanted to get some flowers," she said, "and she knew the rain would beat them all to pieces."

"There is a flower in the house I wish Julia would go a-Maying for," said her father.

The child looked up to her father and said, "We've *no* house-flowers, father, and that is the very reason I wanted to go into the woods to gather some. I *do* want some flowers."

"So do I," answered her father, "but there is one in

particular that I want. It has the brightest colours and the sweetest smell, and sometimes it fairly sparkles with beauty. It is a favourite flower of mine, for it

JULIA AND HER FATHER.

is not only beautiful itself, but it makes those who have it beautiful too."

"What is it?" asked Julia, becoming quite interested about it; "is it a May, or a house flower?"

"Both," said her father; "it grows out-doors and in. We prize it most, perhaps, in-doors, because it spreads such a pleasing sweetness all through the house."

"Why, do tell me; what is it, father?" asked the child.

"Will you gather me a sprig and bring it to me when I come home to dinner?"

"Why, father, it rains," cried the child; "I can't go out. What is the name of the flower?"

"It is the flower of Good Temper," said her father; "I am sure it grows in this house."

Julia saw in a moment what her father meant, and felt the reproof. Ashamed of herself, she ran up to her own room and locked herself in. Then she had a good hearty cry over her folly and wickedness. She saw how wrong it was to quarrel with God for sending rain, when he saw best to send it; and to make all about her unhappy by her fretful temper and sulky looks. She asked God to forgive her; and prayed for grace to learn of Jesus, and be like him, meek, and kind, and gentle.

And, when her father came home, she put into his arms a great bunch of the flower of Good Temper, which he so much liked, for she put herself there.

And nothing could have made that dear child look so beautiful as that sweet flower of Good Temper did. The best way of making ourselves beautiful is trying to be like Jesus. And this lesson we may learn from the moon. For it is by trying to be like the sun, in giving to us the light which the sun gives to it, that the moon is made beautiful.

The second way in which the moon praises God *is by its beauty.*

*But there is a third way in which the moon praises God, and that is*—BY ITS USEFULNESS.

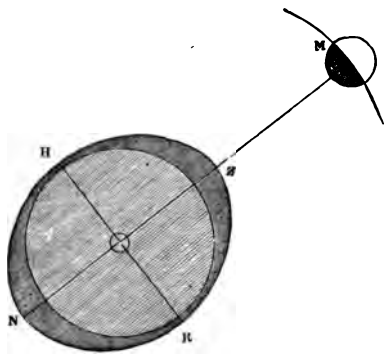
There are several ways in which the moon is of use to us. One of these is *by the light which it gives us at night.* In large cities, where we have gas to light

THE HARVEST MOON.

up our houses and streets, the light of the moon is not of so much consequence. But in country places it is very different. There, when arrangements are

made for holding meetings, or for attending to anything that has to be done at night, the moon is always thought of; and people try to make their plans in such a way as to have the benefit of the moonlight. The moon is very useful there, and the light it gives is a great comfort and blessing.

And then the moon is very useful *in causing the tides.* You know that the water in our oceans and rivers is rising or falling all the time. There is a constant current in the water, which leads it to flow so many hours in one direction, and then so many hours in the opposite direction. And this motion of the water we call the tide. And these tides are caused by the moon. The moon exercises a drawing power on the Earth. The water of the ocean feels this power, and it is this which makes the tides. And these tides are of great use. They make rivers navigable when they would not be so without the tide.




THEORY OF THE TIDES.*

* The moon, M, raises the waters beneath itself, Z and N, at which places it is high water; but at the same time depresses at H and R, at which places it is low water.

And then the tides *promote cleanliness.* The current that runs through or near a great city—as the Thames does through London—acts the part of a scavenger. It sweeps away a great deal of foul matter, that would create sickness and cause death if it were not taken away. The tides help to keep the waters of the ocean pure, too, by the constant motion thus kept up among them.

And then the tides are of great use in keeping alive, along our shores and coasts, different kinds of shell-fish and sea-weed, which are very serviceable to man. Some of these could not live if they were kept *in* the water, or *out* of the water, all the time. But between the *high* tide and the *low* tide, they are *in* the water part of the time, and *out* of the water part of the time. This is just the thing that suits them, and so they live and flourish for our use.

And then there is another way in which the moon is of very great use, namely, to sailors at sea, *in helping them to find out where they are.*

When a sailor is out of sight of land, there are two things he wants to know in order to tell just where he is. These two things are his latitude and longitude. The latitude of a place means its distance north or south from the equator. The longitude of a place means its distance east or west from any known place. The sailor can find out his latitude by the help of the sun; but to find out his longitude he needs the help of the moon. The moon is of the greatest possible use to the sailor in this respect.

In all these different ways the moon praises God

*by its usefulness.* Like Jesus, it is "going about doing good" all the time.

And we should try to follow the example of the moon by making ourselves useful.

MOONLIGHT AT SEA.

Before you can begin to carry on some kinds of business, you need either a good deal of talent or a good deal of money, or both. But in the business of doing good, or trying to be useful, we need very little money and very little talent. We can set up here on a very small capital. Let me give you one or two stories to show how little we need in order to make ourselves useful.

A little boy named Willie H—— used to pass by a lady's house every day as he drove a neighbour's cow to pasture and back again. He was a very bad

boy. He used to swear dreadfully, and was very rude. The lady who lived in this house always called her children into the house if they were playing on the pavement when Willie was going by. She did not want them to hear the terrible oaths that he swore. One day this lady thought she would try to do some good to this poor neglected boy. And I want you to notice what she did. How little it cost her, and yet how much good it led to!

As he was driving the cow past one morning, she called him kindly to her, and said,—

"Willie, my boy, do you go to school?"

A gruff "No" was the only reply.

"Can you read?"

"Not much; and I don't want to."

The lady pitied the boy. He had no instruction and no encouragement at home. His parents were not only poor, but very wicked. He had no one to help him to do right.

"Will you stop here a minute on your way back, Willie?" said the lady; "there is something I want to give you."

Willie nodded his head, with a look of wonder. He was not used to have anything given him but kicks, and knocks, and cross words. To be spoken to kindly, and have a present made to him, was something new. As soon as he was gone, the lady got a nice New Testament and wrote his name in it. He called on his way back and got his Testament. The kindness of the lady and the interest she seemed to take in him had a great effect upon him. He pro-

mised the lady that he would try to spell out and read at least one verse every day in his Testament. He also promised her to come to the Sunday school next Sunday. And he kept his promise.

A year passed away, and after that a great change took place in Willie H——. He was always in his place at church. It was pleasant to see him sitting there, with his eyes fastened on the minister, as if he were afraid to lose a single word that he was saying. And as often as the Sunday came round, Willie could be seen, with his little Testament in his hand, and his clothes brushed clean, on his way to school. His lesson was always well learned; and the rough, ragged, swearing boy, who was a plague to the village a year before, had now become one of the best boys in the neighbourhood.

Now, how very little it cost that good lady to speak a kind word to the rude, swearing cow-boy, and give him a copy of the New Testament! And if Willie grows up to be a holy and useful man, who can tell how much good will result from this one kind act of that Christian lady?

One day a lady was walking along a lane near a country village. She was a Sunday-school teacher, but she was not rich, and her health was not very good, so she had neither time nor strength to spend in visiting the sick and suffering. As she walked slowly on, she was feeling very sad to think how useless she was,—that she could do so little good.

Presently she saw an old man coming towards her. His form was bent, his cheek was furrowed with age,

and his hair was white and thin. In one hand was a staff, and in the other a stick, which he held across his shoulder, and on it hung a wallet which held a few articles of clothing. He came tottering along, and as the lady drew near, he stepped aside to let her pass. As she did this she looked kindly on him and smiled sweetly, without saying a word. The old man had been looking very worn and sad; but the pleasant look of this good lady seemed to go right to his heart. His face lighted up; his whole manner changed; and with great interest he said, "Ah, how d'ye do? how d'ye do?" Nothing more was said, and each passed on in silence.

About a week afterwards the same lady was going along that lane again. When she came to the spot where she had met the old man, she saw a woman sitting on the grass by the roadside, with her elbow on her knee, and her head resting on her hand. "She did not notice me in passing," says the lady, "for her eyes were closed; but she looked so sad and weary, that I felt as if I must go back and speak to her. I was carrying a little basket in my hand, and in the basket were two or three apples. I emptied them on the grass beside the woman, and said,—

"'My friend, you look tired and sad; perhaps these apples will refresh you. Will you accept them?'

"At the sound of my voice she started, looked earnestly at me, and said: 'Accept them! oh yes, miss, and with a thousand thanks.'

"On talking with her a few minutes, I found she

had been to see a poor sister, residing several miles distant, who was sick and dying.

"As I turned to leave her, she thanked me again and again for the words I had spoken to her. And then, fixing her eyes very earnestly on me, she said: 'Mayn't I ask, miss, if you are not the young lady that spoke so kindly last week to my poor old father?'

"'I met an old man,' said I, 'just about this spot, and I smiled on him in passing, but I didn't speak to him.'

"'That was my father,' said the woman, grasping my hand; 'and in his name I thank you for that smile. He has talked about it ever since, and tells everybody how much good it did him. And now I can't tell you how much good your kindness has done me;' and she pressed my hand," said the lady, "and burst into tears."

Here were two sad and sorrowing hearts made glad by a smile, a kind word, and an apple. Then never let any of us say that we are of no use and can do no good. There are sorrowing hearts around us everywhere, and by pleasant looks, by loving smiles, and words of kindness, we can comfort them and help them and do them good.

"Praise ye Him, sun and moon." We have spoken of three ways in which the moon praises God: namely, by its *punctuality*, by its *beauty*, and by its *usefulness*. Let us think of these things whenever we look at the moon, and let us try to praise God in the same ways.

IV.

# How the Stars Praise God.

"Praise Him, all ye stars of light."—Ps. cxlviii. 3.

WE have spoken before of the way in which the sun and the moon praise God. Now we come to talk about the way in which the stars praise him. We all love to look at the stars. It is a beautiful sight, when the sky is clear, to look out at night and gaze at them. What multitudes of them there are! How calm and still they seem! How beautifully they shine and sparkle! We never get tired of looking at them. How they set us to thinking! They make us wonder how it is that God, who has so many other worlds to think about, should ever take so much notice of such poor, sinful creatures as we are! This is just the way it made David think and feel as he kept his father's flock in the fields of Bethlehem, more than three thousand years ago. He often used to be out in the fields all night minding the sheep;

then he would have a fine opportunity of watching the stars. And in that country the sky seems clearer and the stars appear to shine more brightly than they do with us.

I never shall forget the view of the stars we had one night, while travelling through the Holy Land. We had encamped for the night in a narrow gorge among the mountains of Lebanon. The wind was blowing through the gorge all night with very great violence. About one o'clock it blew our tent over. We awoke to find nothing over our heads but the sky. And as I lay in my little cot-bed and looked up, I thought it was one of the most glorious sights I had ever seen. The sky seemed as black as ebony; and the stars appeared to stand out, and sparkle so brilliantly, that I could hardly keep from clapping my hands and crying out, "Oh, how beautiful!" And then I thought, that is just the way in which the stars used to appear to David as he gazed upon them. No wonder, then, that as he looked up to the sky at night he should have used those words that we find written in the Eighth Psalm: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" When we have been looking at the sky at night, perhaps there is not one of us who has not often felt inclined to make use of the simple words of the little hymn, beginning, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

In old times, before telescopes were invented,

"TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR."

people used to have very strange notions about the stars. They thought some of them were wild animals. There is one set of stars which we see in the sky every night, something in the form of a plough, that people formerly used to represent as a

bear, and which they called "The Great Bear." Then there are other stars which they called after the names of great men when they died. One very beautiful set of stars, which we can see every night in the winter-time, they used to call Orion, after a famous hunter of that name. But these were ignorant and silly notions. We know better than this now. Of late years men have invented great telescopes. They have looked at the stars through these, and have found out a great many interesting things about them, of which people in former times knew nothing at all. Now we know that the stars are all worlds. Some of them are very large. When we look at the stars with our naked eyes they all look white, like the moon. But if we could look at them through one of the great telescopes which are used by the astronomers, or men who study the stars, we should find that they are of very different colours. Some are red, and some are yellow, and some are green, and some are blue, and some are purple. Instead of being all of one colour, we should see as many colours among them as there are among the flowers of a garden. This must make the stars look wonderfully beautiful. Even from what he knew about them David might well say, "Praise Him, all ye stars."

The subject we are now to consider is—*How the stars praise God.*

I wish to speak of *four* things about the stars, by which they praise or glorify God.

*The first of these is—their* NUMBER.

When we look up at the sky on a clear, bright night, and see the stars there, the thing that we think about first is the great number of them. They seem to be too many to count; but it is not so. They can be counted,—they have been counted. It looks as if there was no end to them; and yet there are only a few thousands that can be seen with the naked eye. But if we take a small telescope and look at them through that, we shall see a good many more. If we take a larger telescope, we shall see more still. And the more powerful the telescope is that we look through, the greater is the number of stars that we shall see.

THE MILKY WAY.

If you go out of doors some fine, bright night, and look up at the sky, you will see, stretching right across the heavens, something that looks very much like a thin, long, narrow cloud. It is called "The Milky Way." If we could look at this through a

very large telescope, we should find that what looks so much like a cloud to our naked eyes, is really a great multitude of stars. There are so many of them, and they are so far off from us, that when we look at them the light that shines from them seems all to mingle together so as to appear like a bright cloud. It is just the same when we see a large building illuminated. There is a great window in front of the building. It is filled with lighted lamps or candles. When we stand close to it we can see each lamp or candle by itself. But if we go a long way off, and then turn round to look at it, it will seem as if the light from the different candles had all united to make one great blaze. And it is just so with the stars in the Milky Way. It is a great cloud of stars. There are millions on millions of stars in that one cloud or company. And then there are a great many other clouds of stars as large as that in other parts of the heavens. Each one of those clouds has, it may be, as many millions on millions of stars in it as there are in the Milky Way. And when we come to put these all together, oh! what a multitude of stars they make!

You know Methuselah lived to be nearly a thousand years old. Yet if we could live to be as old as Methuselah was, and if we should spend all the years of that long life, both night and day, in doing nothing else but counting, we should not begin to get through with finding out how many stars there are. And this is the reason why, when God wishes to speak, in the Bible, of things that are very numerous,

he says they are "like the stars of heaven for multitude, or like the sand on the sea-shore, innumerable." There are so many stars that it is impossible for us to count them. Nobody in the world can tell how many there are. But God can tell! The Bible says: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names" (Ps. cxlvii. 4). As the shepherd of a flock knows the names of his sheep; as the teacher of a class knows the names of his scholars; as the father of a family knows the names of his children,—so God, who made this great multitude of stars, knows the name of every one. And he takes as much care of each star as though he had only that one to think about.

Some men have the power of attending to several things at once. We think this very wonderful. Napoleon Buonaparte, it is said, had the power of keeping six men engaged in writing letters for him at the same time. He could tell the first man what to write, then the second, then the third, and so on till he got to the last; and then he would go on with the first again. This was very remarkable. Very few men could do so. But it was nothing to what God does. There are millions, that we can't count, of stars in the sky. But God is thinking about every one, and caring about every one, all the time. And this shows us how the stars praise God. By their *number* they praise him. They praise him and glorify him by showing how great and wonderful a God he must be, to be able to take care of such a multitude of worlds at once.

And when we think of the *number* of the stars, it should teach us a lesson of *trust*. I want you to connect these two words together. Whenever you look at the stars, or think how many there are, let their *number* lead you to *trust* God.

The God who can take care of so many worlds at once, can do anything for his people that he sees will be best for them. It is worth while to trust in such a God. If we only learn to trust God properly, it will make us very happy. And looking at God's works should lead us to trust him.

Some years ago there was a German prince whose name was Baron H——. He was a good Christian man, and he lived in a fine old castle on the banks of the river Rhine. He had only one son, who was a very good young man,—not only a comfort to his father, but a blessing to all the people who lived on his father's land.

It happened once, while this young man was away from home, that a French gentleman came to the castle on a visit to the baron. This French gentleman did not believe in God, and never thought of trusting to him for anything.

One day, when they were talking together, he said some things about God which grieved the good baron very much. He could not help saying to him,—"My friend, are you not afraid of offending God, who reigns above, by speaking of him in this way?"

"No," said the gentleman. "I have never seen God. I know nothing of him, and care nothing about him."

The baron said nothing more to him at that time, but resolved to try and show him how wrong he was before he left his house. So the next morning he took him about his castle grounds to show him different things. In the first place he showed him a beautiful picture that hung on the wall. The gentleman admired the picture very much, and said,—"Whoever drew this picture must be a very good painter."

"My son drew that picture," said the baron.

"Then your son is a very clever man," said the gentleman.

The baron then went with him into the garden. It was beautifully laid out, with a great variety of the finest flowers and trees.

"What a beautiful garden!" said the gentleman. "Do tell me who planned and arranged it?"

"It is my son's work," said the baron.

"Indeed," said the gentleman; "I am beginning to think very highly of him."

The baron then took him into the village, and showed him a nice cottage which his son had built, at his own expense, as a home and school for all the young children in the village who had lost their parents, where they were taken care of and educated. The little children in the home seemed so clean and comfortable and happy, that the gentleman was quite delighted with the sight of them; and when he had returned to the castle he said to the baron, "What a happy man you must be, to have so good a son!"

"How do you know that I have so good a son?" asked the baron.

"Because I have seen his works, and I know that he must be good and clever if he has done all that you have shown me."

"But you have not seen him."

"No; but I know him very well, because I judge of him by his works."

"Very true," said the baron; "and it is just in this way that I judge of the character of our heavenly Father. I know by his works that he is a God of infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness. And every star that twinkles in the sky by night, and every tree that grows in the field, and every flower that blooms in the garden by day, seems to tell me that I ought to love him and trust him."

Nellie Parsons went to a school in the country. It was about a mile from her home; and it was too far for her to walk in the winter. Her father always sent her to school in the morning in a carriage, or a sleigh, and brought her home at night in the same way.

One afternoon he stopped at the schoolhouse, and calling Nellie out, said,—"I am going up the road several miles, and may not return till after school is out. But wait for me till I come. I will be here before dark."

When school was over, the children wrapped themselves in their cloaks and overcoats and shawls, and set out for home.

"Aren't you going?" asked one of the last that left the schoolroom, as she saw Nellie take her seat by the stove.

"Father told me to wait for him," said Nellie.

"Aren't you afraid to stay here alone?"

"What is there to be afraid of? It is nice and warm here."

"I should be afraid to stay here alone," said the girl. "It will be dark pretty soon."

"Father said he would be here *before* dark."

"What will you do if he don't come?"

"Father will come for me; he said he would."

Nellie was left alone. Time seemed to move very slowly; yet the sun went down, and it began to be gloomy. She went to the door and looked out for her father. He was not in sight, although from the door of the schoolhouse you could see nearly a mile along the road. Presently a man came along with a yoke of oxen and a sled. He was a neighbour of theirs.

"What are you doing here?" he asked of Nellie, when he saw her standing in the door.

"I am waiting for father," was her answer.

"It will soon be dark," he said. "You had better get on my sled, and go as far as our house. It wouldn't be pleasant for you to stay here all night."

"Father will be sure to come for me," said Nellie. "He told me to wait till he came."

It was nearly dark, but not quite, when her father drove up to the door. He had been detained longer than he expected, and he had left his business unfinished, in order to keep his promise and get back to his dear child before dark.

"Were you afraid I wouldn't come, Nellie?" he

asked, as he wrapped her up in the nice warm buffalo robe.

"No, father," was the answer of the loving child; "you said you would come, and *I knew I could trust you.*"

How beautiful this is! If we could have the same sort of trust in our heavenly Father that Nellie Parsons had in her earthly father, how happy we should be! And yet Nellie's father had not done a hundredth part as much for her as our Father in heaven has done for us. He is the God "who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names;" and we should trust, with our whole hearts, every word that he has spoken. The stars praise God by their *number*. And when we think of the *number* of the stars, it should teach us a lesson of *trust*.

*The second way in which the stars praise God is—by their* GREATNESS.

When we look at the stars with our naked eye they seem to be very small. They look like mere sparkling points, not bigger than little diamonds or beads of glass. Children sometimes think that they are lamps which God has hung up in the sky to give us light by night. It was a pretty thought which a little boy had once, who asked if the stars were not gimlet-holes which God had made in the sky in order to let the glory of heaven shine through them.

But the only reason why the stars look so small is because they are so very far off from us. And though

they *look* so small, they are really of very great size. When we were talking about the sun, you may remember that I said the sun is more than a million times as large as our earth. And most of the stars that we see shining in the sky at night are suns as

A STARRY NIGHT.

large as our sun, and some of them a great deal larger.

And yet, although the stars are so many in number, and so great in size, God made them all, God holds them all in their places, God guides them all, and God takes care of them all. And so we may well say that the stars praise God by their *greatness*, because in this way they show how wonderful his power and wisdom are. And, therefore, when we look at

the stars, and think of their greatness, there are two lessons they should teach us.

One of these is *a lesson of remembrance.*

Those bright, beautiful, twinkling stars are all so many witnesses for God. They tell us that there *is* a God, and that he is very wise, and very good, and very powerful. And every time that we look at the stars, they should lead us to think about God.

You know that a good many years ago there was what is called a revolution in France. A revolution means a turning round, or turning upside down. When a wheel turns round, so that the part that was at the top comes to the bottom, and the part that was at the bottom comes to the top, we call that a revolution of the wheel. But the revolution in France was a revolution of the government. Wicked men killed the king and upset the government. They burned the Bible, and did away with the Sabbath, and said there was no God. The churches were shut up, and many of them were destroyed.

One day one of these wicked men said to a pióus countryman,—"I am going to have your church tower pulled down, so that you may have nothing left to remind you of God or religion."

"Then," said the countryman, "you will have to blot out the stars. They are older than our church tower, and can be seen at a much greater distance. If our church is destroyed, the sun, and the moon, and the stars will never cease to speak to us about God, and to remind us of what we owe to him."

This is true; and this is what David means when

he says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." And what David wrote in this verse, has been beautifully expressed by Addison in his sweet hymn:—

"The unwearied sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

"Soon as the evening shades prevail
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly, to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of her birth.

"While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole."

The stars praise God by their *greatness*, and so teach us a lesson of *remembrance*.

The other lesson which the stars teach us by their greatness is *a lesson of comfort*.

It is a comfort to have a strong helper when we have some hard work to do or a heavy burden to bear. And when we think of the greatness of the stars, it should teach us what a strong helper we have in God.

One day a father was walking homewards from a certain town with his little boy. Like a good many other boys, this little fellow was very self-willed—that is, he liked very much to have his own way. And he had a very high opinion of himself. He thought he could do almost anything he wanted to do.

His father was carrying a parcel in his hand. Charlie, the little boy, asked his father to let *him* carry the parcel.

"Oh no; you are not strong enough," said his father.

"I can carry it very well, I'm sure," said Charlie, eager to show what a man he was.

"My dear child, I tell you it's too large and heavy for you."

"No, no, father; please let me have it."

"I tell you, you are not strong enough to carry it."

"Indeed I am, though. I can carry it very easily. Do, please, let me have it."

"Very well; if you *will* have it, you may. The parcel is no burden to *me;* but I tell you again, it is too large and heavy for *you;* but if you are resolved to have it, here it is."

The little boy took it, and at first got on with it pretty well; but soon it began to feel very heavy. He turned it over to the other arm. His father seemed to take no notice of it. He went on talking to his son about the weather, about their home, and about different things they were passing along the road. The little boy kept turning over the heavy burden from one arm to the other. But still his father didn't appear to notice it. At last the little fellow said, "Father, what a *heavy* parcel this is!"

"I told you so before you took it," said his father.

"It's *very* heavy indeed."

"I told you it was *too* heavy, and yet you would have it."

"It's *very*—heavy—*too* heavy for me. Father, will you please carry it?"

"To be sure I will. Why didn't you ask me before?"

Then his father took it up, and the little boy was very glad to get rid of it.

And something like this is taking place with us all the time. God, who made all the great stars, is our burden-bearer. He says to each of us, "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.*" He is willing to take all our burdens and bear them for us,—the burden of our sins, and the burden of all our cares and troubles. But, like the little boy in the story, we think we can bear these burdens ourselves, and we are not willing to cast them on God; and this gives us a good deal of trouble. But as soon as we bring them to God he bears them for us, and then we are happy. It is a blessed thing for us when we are willing to let God carry our burdens.

*But it is a comfort to have a friend who can take care of us at all times*, as well as bear our heavy burdens for us; and when we think of the greatness of the stars, we see that God is just such a friend.

We have to meet a great many dangers and trials in this world in which we are not able to protect or help ourselves, and when our only comfort will be in having God, as our friend, to take care of us.

Some years ago, Captain D—— commanded a fine ship that sailed from Liverpool to New York. During one of his voyages he had all his family, with many emigrants, on board the ship with him.

One night, while all were quietly asleep, a sudden squall of wind arose. It struck the vessel with great force, and threw her over on her beam-ends. There was a great tumbling and crashing of things on board. The passengers awoke in a great fright. They were

CAUGHT IN A SQUALL.

in great danger. Every one on board was alarmed. Some jumped out of their berths and began to dress themselves in a hurry, not knowing but that the vessel would soon sink.

The captain had a little girl on board about eight years old. She awoke with the rest of the passengers.

"What's the matter?" asked the frightened child. They told her that a squall of wind had struck the ship, and thrown her on her side.

"Is father on deck?" she asked.

"Yes, father's on deck."

"Then it'll be all right," she said, and quietly sank back on her pillow, and went to sleep again.

How beautiful this was! What a lesson we should learn from it! *We* have a Father in heaven, wiser, and stronger, and better by far than that little girl's earthly father was. And when danger comes, or storms burst upon us, we may be sure our heavenly Father is always on deck. He knows all about the vessel, the winds, the waves, the rocks, the storms. He is on deck all the time. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." He is "on deck;" for he says, "Lo, I am with you alway." He is "on deck;" for he has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." When you think of the greatness of the stars, remember that the God who made them is your Father and Friend. When the storm comes, he is always "on deck" to take care of you.

There is just one other story I wish to tell you, to show how easily God can make use of the very smallest thing in order to take care of his people, and protect them when they are in danger.

Some years ago there was an old German count, who was a good Christian man, and who was saved from death by the kindness of God in a very wonderful way.

You know we read in the Bible how Daniel, who was such a good man, had a great many enemies, who hated him just because he was so good. This has often been the case since Daniel's time. And this was the case with the good German count of whom I am now speaking. There were a number of people in the place where he lived who hated him for his religion; and they carried their hatred so far, that they resolved to kill him. And in order to do this without being found out, they hired a wicked man to go into his castle one night and kill him while asleep in his bed.

The arrangements were all made, and the night was fixed on which this dreadful deed was to be done.

The good count had no idea of the danger that was hanging over him. It so happened that on the evening of the very night on which his enemies had agreed to murder him, he had a company of young people at his castle. He was very fond of children, but having none of his own, he had invited his nephews and nieces to spend the evening with him. They had a merry time together, and the evening passed off very pleasantly. The count told them interesting stories, and got up amusing games, and had a good supply of apples, and pears, and grapes, and nuts; and they all enjoyed themselves very much.

But at last the hour came for them to go home. They all left the castle. After they were gone, the count read a chapter in the Bible, as he was in the habit of doing, and then kneeled down to pray. He thanked God for the mercies of the day, and asked

him to take care of him and protect him from danger during the night. Then he lay down and went to sleep without any thought of danger.

About midnight, the murderer, who had managed to creep into the castle during the day, and had hidden himself away, came silently into the chamber of the count. The old man was fast asleep, and a night-lamp was burning on the table. The murderer was armed with a long, sharp dagger, which glittered in his right hand, as he gradually drew near to the bed, with a soft and careful step. But suddenly, when he was only a few feet from the bed, a loud crackling noise was heard sounding through the still chamber. It awoke the count. He sat up in bed. He saw the murderer approaching him. He seized a pistol, which he always kept on his pillow, and pointing it at the man, he said, "If you move another step, I'll shoot you!"

Then with his other hand he rang the bell violently. Pretty soon his servants rushed into the room. The murderer was taken prisoner, and the wicked men who had hired him to do that dreadful deed were found out and punished.

But what made the noise which woke the count? It was a nut lying on the floor. It happened that one of the boys of the company the count had had there the evening before, had dropped a nut on the floor in going through his uncle's room. And God—*that* God "who telleth the number of the stars," and rules them in all their greatness—had caused that nut to fall just where the murderer's foot would tread

upon it, and the noise of its crushing would wake the count in time to save his life. How wonderful this is!

We have spoken of two ways in which the stars praise God. One is by their *number;* the other is by their *greatness.* When we think of their *number,* it should teach us a lesson of *trust.* When we think of their *greatness,* it should teach us a lesson of *remembrance* and of *comfort.* Every time we see them they should remind us of God. They should tell us not only that there *is* a God, but that with all the wisdom and power that enable him to count the stars in their number, and govern them in their greatness, he is willing to bear our burdens for us, and be our Keeper and Care-taker in every time of danger. And when we read of that blessed Jesus who once lay as an infant in the manger at Bethlehem, who afterwards was nailed to the cross on Calvary, and who, while on earth, took the children in his arms, and folded them to his bosom, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," let us remember that he is the same God who counts those stars in their number, and rules them in their greatness. And remember, too, that he loves you better than anybody else does, and *he wants you to love him.* Let us all lift up our hearts to him, and say,—

"Blessed Jesus, we thank thee for thy wonderful love to us. Teach us to love thee above all things, and make us thy friends and servants for ever." *Amen.*

V.

# How the Stars Praise God.

"Praise Him, all ye stars."—Ps. cxlviii. 3.

WE have already spoken of two things by which the stars praise God. One is by their *number;* the other is by their *greatness.* When we think of the *number* of the stars, it should teach us a lesson of *trust.* When we think of their *greatness,* it should teach us a lesson of *remembrance* and a lesson of *comfort.*

*The third thing about the stars, by which they praise God, is their* DISTANCES.

It is very wonderful to think of the number of the stars. It is equally wonderful to think of their greatness. But then it is just as wonderful to think of their distances. There is nothing about the stars that surprises us more than this. These distances are so vast, so prodigious, that we can hardly understand them or form any idea of them. We see the figures written down which represent the number of

millions of miles that separate them from us; we read over those figures, and talk about them, but we don't understand them. The word million is a little word; there are only seven letters in it. It is very easy to write this word, or to speak it; but it is not so easy to understand it. We can understand what a hundred means, or a thousand; but when we try to think about a hundred thousand, and then about ten hundred thousand, which make a million, our minds get confused. We can't understand it. But when we come to speak of hundreds of millions, and thousands of millions, and millions of millions, our minds seem crushed under the burden,—just as a butterfly would be if we should put a mountain on it. And yet it is only by such figures as these that the number of miles which represent the distances of the stars can be set before us.

But if we cannot understand these figures, we must try to get an idea of the great distances which separate the stars from each other, and from ourselves, in some other way. And how shall we do it? Suppose we set off on a journey to two or three of the stars, and see how long it will take us. Of course, I do not mean a real journey. That would be impossible. I only mean an imaginary or make-believe journey. We can just *suppose* that we were going on such a journey, without ever going at all.

Well, then, let us get ready for our journey. Our first trip will be to the nearest of the stars. This is a star well known to astronomers, though we do not see it in this country, because it only appears in the

sky on the other side of the equator. But now, what shall we travel in? A locomotive would be too heavy, and thirty miles an hour would be too slow.

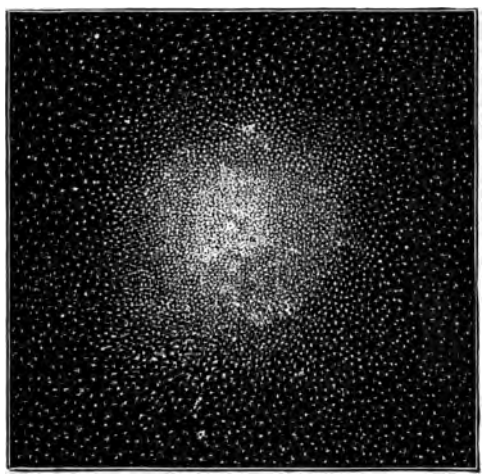
NIGHT.

Suppose we could travel inside of a cannon-ball! That would take us five hundred miles an hour. But still this would be too slow. Well, suppose we could have a train made entirely out of light. That

would be very bright and beautiful. Yes; and suppose this train would take us just as fast as the light goes in coming to us from the sun. Do you know how fast light travels? A little over one hundred and ninety thousands of miles in a second of time. Let us throw off the little over, and for the sake of convenience just take the even number. Let us say, light travels at the rate of one hundred and ninety thousand miles in a second. You know that the circumference of our earth, or a line going round the outside of it, is about twenty-four thousand miles. Now, if there were a railway running all round the earth, and if we could start in a train that would go thirty miles an hour, and travel night and day without stopping, it would take us more than a month to make this journey. But in our train of light, travelling as fast as the light travels, we should go round the world nearly eight times in a second. Only think of going eight times round the world while a watch is ticking once! That is the rate at which light travels. And a hundred and ninety thousand miles a second is about twelve millions of miles a minute. Well, we get into our train of light, and set off on a journey to the nearest fixed star in the sky. We travel night and day, at the rate of twelve millions of miles a minute, and it would take us three years and seven months to get there.

One of the brightest stars that we can see in our sky, on a winter's night, is called Sirius. It is a very beautiful star. Get some one to show it to you the first clear night we have. And when you look

at it, just remember that its distance from us is so great, that if we should set off to travel to it in our train of light, going day and night, at twelve millions of miles a minute, it would take *twenty-two years* to get there. There is one star in our sky that can be seen with the naked eye, and yet is so very far off, that travelling at the same rate in our train of light it would take us *seventy-two years* to get there.



A CLUSTER OF STARS.

There was an English astronomer named Sir William Herschel. He made one of the largest telescopes ever known. In looking through it at the sky he found a group of stars that looked like a little bit of a cloud. There are millions of stars in that cloud. But oh! how far, far away they are! Sir William

spent a great deal of time in studying their distances from our earth. I will not attempt to tell you how many millions of miles those stars are away from us.

But if we could start off in our train of light to visit that group of stars that Sir William saw through his great telescope, flying away at the rate of twelve millions of miles in a minute, it would take us *seven hundred thousand years* to get there! This is more than a hundred times as long as the period which has passed away since our world was created. How great the distance of those stars is! And yet God is present in them all. He takes as much care of the most distant star, that the astronomers can just see with their huge telescopes, as he does of this world in which we live. And in the vast distances which lie between those far-off worlds and ours there is no single spot, or point of space, where God is not present all the time. And when we think of the great distances of the stars, we see how they praise God by showing that he is a God who is everywhere present.

And there are two lessons taught us by the distances of the stars. One of them is *a lesson of fear.*

The God who is present all the time in each of those far-off stars, is a God whose eye is always on us, and whom we should be afraid of offending. But there is nothing that offends God as sin does. Then we should fear to sin against God.

But when the Bible speaks to us of fearing God, it doesn't mean that we should feel towards him as the poor slave would feel towards his task-master, who stands over him with whip in hand, ready to lash

him in a moment if he stops working or does anything wrong. No; but, instead of this, it means that we should have the same kind of feeling towards God that an affectionate child has towards his father and mother, when he would not for the world do anything that he knows will grieve them. The slave fears his master, but he doesn't love him. The child fears his

"THOU GOD SEEST ME."

father because he does love him. And this is the kind of feeling we should have towards God. When we look up at the twinkling stars, and think of their great distances, and yet how God is present with them all, then we should remember,—"*Thou God seest me.*" And the thought of God's presence should

teach us a lesson of *fear*. It should make us afraid to do anything that we know will displease God.

Joseph had learned this lesson of fear well. For when he was tempted to do wrong, he said: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

A little boy and girl, brother and sister, were playing in the dining-room, where their mother had set a basket of cakes on the tea-table, and then had gone out.

"How nice they look," said Charlie, reaching out his hand to take one of the cakes.

"Oh, don't do that, Charlie," said his sister Jane. "You know mother told us not to take any of them."

"But mother didn't count them; and she won't know if I take just one," said Charlie.

"But remember, Charlie, that God counts," said his sister, "and he will know."

Charlie put back the cake and turned away from the temptation, looking very serious. Presently he said, "You are right, sister: God *does* count; for the Bible says, 'He telleth the number of the stars;' and 'The hairs of our head are all numbered.'"

One day a lady came home from shopping. Her little boy didn't run to meet her, and throw his arms around her neck, as he was in the habit of doing, to show how glad he was to have her come home again. Instead of this, he seemed to be afraid to look his mother in the face, and kept out of her way as much as he could all day. His mother thought it very strange, and wondered what was the reason of it.

At the close of the day she found out the reason. When she was undressing him to go to bed, he said:

"Mother, can God see through the crack in the closet door?"

"Yes," said his mother.

"And can he see when it's all dark there?"

"Yes," she said; "he can see us at all times, and in all places."

"Then God saw me," said the little fellow, "and I may as well tell you all about it. When you were gone out, I got into the closet and ate up the cake. I'm sorry, very sorry. Please, forgive me;" and he laid his head on his mother's lap and cried bitterly. If this little fellow had remembered the lesson of fear that we are now speaking of, it would have saved him from this sin, and the sorrow which it brought him.

"Johnnie," said a man, winking slyly to a youth of his acquaintance in a shop, "you must give me *extra* measure. Your master isn't in."

Johnnie looked up in the man's face very seriously, and said:—

"*My Master is always in.*"

Johnnie's Master was the *all-seeing* God. Let us all, when we are tempted to do wrong, adopt Johnnie's motto: "My Master is always in." It will save us from many a sin, and so from much sorrow.

And this is one of the lessons we should learn when we think of the great distances of the stars. However far off they are, God is always present with them. And the God who is present with them is present with us too. And if God is always present with us, we should learn a lesson of *fear*. We should be afraid of doing anything to offend him.

The other lesson which the distance of the stars should teach us is, *a lesson of courage.*

If we only learn to fear God in the right way, we shall learn at the same time never to fear anything else. Those who fear God properly, are the bravest people in the world. The Bible tells us that "the wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are *bold as a lion*" (Prov. xxviii. 1).

And this is the meaning of one of the verses of the psalm we sometimes sing, which says,—

> "Fear *Him*, ye saints, and ye will then
> Have nothing else to fear."

When Daniel's enemies tried to stop him from praying to God, he didn't mind them at all, though they threatened to have him thrown into the den of hungry lions. He was afraid to offend God by ceasing to pray to him; but he was not afraid of the den of lions.

And so it was with Daniel's three friends. The king commanded them to bow down to his golden idol and worship it, and threatened to throw them into the fiery furnace if they refused to obey him. They were afraid to sin against God by worshipping that idol; but they were not afraid of the flames of the burning furnace. And so these two lessons of fear and courage always go together. If we learn the first lesson rightly, we shall be sure to learn the second. If we only fear God in the proper way, we shall have so much courage that we shall not fear anything else.

A good many years ago, a terrible sickness, called

the plague, was prevailing in London. Multitudes of people were dying from it, and most of those who were able to do so left the city and went somewhere else to live. There was a good nobleman living in London at that time, named Lord Craven. As the sickness was getting worse and worse, he made up his mind to get away from the danger by going into the country to live till the plague was over. His coach with four horses was standing at the door. The baggage was put in, and everything was ready for the journey. His lordship was walking through the hall with his hat on, his cane under his arm, and he was putting on his gloves ready to step into the carriage, when he heard a negro servant say to one of the other servants: "I suppose, from our master's leaving London to avoid the plague, that his God lives in the country, and not in the town."

The poor negro really meant what he said. He knew no better. In Africa, where he came from, they had many false gods. They supposed that some gods belonged to one place and some to another, and that they had no power except in the place to which they belonged. And the negro thought it was the same in England.

This speech of his had a great effect on the mind of Lord Craven. It set him to thinking seriously. He said to himself: "My God lives everywhere. He can take care of me in town as well as in the country. I'll stay where I am. The ignorance of this poor negro has taught me a good lesson. May the Lord pardon my unbelief."

Then he ordered the horses to be taken out of the coach, and the baggage to be brought in. He stayed

LORD CRAVEN AND THE NEGRO.

in London all the time the plague continued there. He was very useful among his sick neighbours, but he never took the plague himself.

Now here you see, that while this nobleman was wrong in his feelings towards God, he was afraid of

the plague. But as soon as he remembered that God is present everywhere, as soon as he really feared God, he no longer feared the plague or anything else.

If we learn to fear God, and have right thoughts about him, it will often save us from being frightened. Young people have a great many frights. They are afraid of being in the dark; afraid of robbers, of ghosts, and many other things.

Let me tell how a little girl once got over a great fright just by fearing God, and having right thoughts about him. She went to pay a visit to her aunt in the country. While there she had to sleep in a room by herself. This was not pleasant to her, for at home she always slept with her sister.

One night during this visit she awoke suddenly, and saw something white at the foot of her bed. Its head, which she thought she saw as plainly as could be, was turned a little to one side, and was not looking at her. She said to herself: "It's a ghost—I'm sure it is!" and she pulled the bed-clothes over her head.

Presently she said to herself: "Well, what if there is a ghost here, isn't *God* here too? and doesn't the Bible say that nothing can harm those who trust in him?" Then she tried to put her trust in God. This gave her courage, and she resolved to take another look at the white thing. It *did* look very much like a living thing of some kind. "Well, if it is," she thought to herself, "I'll speak to it;" and she cried out: "Who's there?" The figure did not stir nor answer. There it stood, as still and white as ever.

"My father says there are no ghosts," she said to herself. "And if there are, what harm is it likely they want to do to me? I'll just put my trust in God, and *he* can take care of me."

This thought gave her courage, and made her feel more comfortable. Still there stood the figure.

"I will know who or what you are," said the little girl. "Mother says frights are worse in people's fancies than anywhere else."

Then she jumped out of bed, and marched straight up to the figure. How many children would have done that? I am afraid some grown people would hardly have had the courage to do this. But this dear child went straight up to it. And what do you suppose it proved to be? Why, it was only the moonlight shining through the curtains on the wall! "How much it did look like a head, with eyes, and nose, and mouth!" she said; and then she jumped into bed again. For a while she lay and looked at it. But it only looked like moonshine now and no ghost; and she wondered how she could have been so deceived. And that, I dare say, is as much as ghosts ever are—*only moonshine.* She kept her eye on the soft silver light till she fell into a sweet sleep again.

And here you see what courage the thought of God's presence gave to this child. As soon as she feared God properly, she had no other fear either for ghosts or anything else.

The third thing about the stars by which they praise God is their *distances.* And when we think

of the distances of the stars, it should teach us a lesson of *fear*, and a lesson of *courage*.

*The fourth and last thing of which I would speak by which the stars praise God, is their* ORDER.

By the order of the stars I mean the regularity of their motions. You know how it is with a company of soldiers when they have been well drilled. They move about with great order and regularity, and obey at once every word of command they hear from their captain. And the stars in the sky are just like a great company of soldiers. They are well drilled, and God is their captain. They obey at once, and without ever getting tired, every word of his command.

When we look up at the stars, it seems as if they were all in confusion. We might think there was no order or regularity about them. They seem so to us only because we cannot look at them from the right point of view, and do not understand their movements. You know how it is with a carpet. If you turn it upside down and look at it on the wrong side, you can't tell what the pattern or figure is. Indeed, you can't tell whether there is any figure in it at all. The threads are in confusion; they all seem jumbled up together. But when you turn it over again, and look at it from the right side, how different it looks! Now you see that every thread has something to do in making out the figure; and you see with what beautiful order that figure is woven out in the carpet.

And it is just so with the stars. They are all arranged in beautiful order. And that order is never

THE ORDER OF THE STARS.

disturbed. They never break their ranks. They never get out of their places. They stay where God puts them. They go where God tells them. They do just what God wants them to do, and nothing else. If you look at the stars in the tail of the Great Bear, or those in the belt of Orion, you will see that they are not in a straight line, but just a little curved. And for hundreds and thousands of years that line has just been the same that it is now. It has never been the least particle more curved or less curved than it is now. And though

those stars have been all the time moving rapidly through the heavens, yet they have always kept in the same places towards each other. They have never come a hair's-breadth nearer to each other, or gone a hair's-breadth further off. And they never will.

And then some of the stars are flying round all the while at a wonderful rate. There is one star that travels at the rate of more than one hundred and seventy thousand miles an hour. Why, if we had a locomotive that could go so fast as that, we might jump into it and go round the world seven times in an hour. And yet, though there are so many stars, and though they are going so fast all the time, yet they never get into confusion. They keep moving with beautiful order and regularity. How wonderful this is! It shows the amazing power and wisdom of God. And thus we see how the stars praise God by their *order*.

And when we think of the order of the stars, there are two lessons it may teach us. One of these is *a lesson of obedience.*

The stars obey God; and this is the secret of the beautiful order which prevails among them. There could be no order among the stars without obedience; and there can be no order anywhere without obedience. The habit of obedience is one of the most important habits we can form when we are young.

There was a gentleman once who was very rich. A friend of his, who knew that he began life as a

poor boy, asked him one day how it was that he had been so successful in his business.

"I owe all my success," said he, "to one habit which my father taught me when I was a boy."

"And pray what was that?" asked his friend.

"It was the habit of obedience, sir. My father used to tell me that when I had any duty to attend to, no matter what it was, I should consider that duty as his command; and then, whether he were present or not, I must obey that command. I got into the habit of doing this. If I had any work to do, I never thought of playing till it was done. If I had only an hour's work to do in the day, I always did the work first, and then took the play afterwards. In this way I got into the habit of doing everything in time, and it soon became easy to me. And I owe all my success in business to this habit."

What an excellent habit this was! And what a valuable rule it was out of which this habit grew! This boy was taught to say to himself,—"The voice of duty is the command of God, and I must obey it." That was a true rule, and it was a wise one. The voice of duty is the command of God. Obey it. Form the habit of obedience to it. This is what the stars do; and it is this which keeps up the beautiful order that prevails among their shining ranks.

But let me tell you a story about a boy whose name was Harry Alford, to show how he practised this habit of obedience when he had learned it.

Harry was on a visit to an aunt who lived in the city. He had seen the boys flying their kites on the tops of

the houses, and he thought it would be nice fun if he could do so too. So he came to his aunt, and said,—

"Aunt Mary, may I go up to the top of the house and fly my kite?"

His aunt wished to do everything that was proper to please him, but she thought this was very unsafe, so she said,—

"No, Harry, my boy; I think that is a very dangerous sort of play. I'd rather you wouldn't go."

"All right, then; I'll go out on the bridge," said Harry. His aunt smiled, and said she hoped he would always be as obedient as that.

"Harry, what are you doing?" said his mother on another occasion.

"Spinning my new top, mother."

"Can't you take the baby out to ride? Get out the carriage, and I'll bring him down."

"All right," shouted the boy, as he put the top away in his pocket, and hastened to obey his mother.

"Aunt Mary, may I go on that errand for you?" said Harry one day. "I think I can find the place, and I like to find my way about the city so much."

"Well," said his aunt, "you go straight down P—— Street to F——, and then cross that, and a little further down is J—— Street. Go along that, and about three turnings down—but, oh no, Harry! it's no use; there are so many crooks and turns on the way you'll never find it. Wait till Robert comes home, and you can go with him."

"All right," was Harry's cheerful reply.

"Uncle William, may I go over to your ware-

house this morning?" said Harry one day at breakfast. "I want to see those baskets again that I was looking at yesterday."

"Oh yes, Harry," said his uncle; "I shall be very glad to have you."

"But I can't spare you to-day, Harry," said his mother; "I want you to go out with me. You shall go to the warehouse another time."

"All right," said Harry, and went on with his breakfast. No matter what Harry was asked to do, or what refusal he met with when asking for anything, his constant answer was—"All right." He never stopped to worry or tease. He never asked, "Why can't I?" or "Why must I?" Harry had not only learned to obey, but he had learned to obey in the right way. He obeyed at once; he obeyed pleasantly; he obeyed, as a little girl once said the angels in heaven do, without asking any questions. "The voice of duty was the command of God" to him, and he always obeyed it. This is one lesson we are taught when we think about the order of the stars—a lesson of *obedience.*

The other lesson which the stars teach us when we think about their order, is *a lesson of diligence.*

The stars not only obey God, but they are *diligent* in obeying him. They never get tired of doing it, and they never stop. And this is what diligence means: it is keeping on in the right way, and never giving up. I suppose that more people fail in their business from want of diligence than from any other cause. If we are tempted to be idle or lazy, then

every time that we look up at the stars, as they go wheeling on in the paths God has marked out for them, we should feel as if they were reproving us, and saying,—"See how we do, and learn a lesson of diligence from us!"

A little boy, named Johnny, went on a visit to his grandfather's house one night. When he was going away, the old gentleman laid his hand kindly on the little fellow's head, and said,—"Johnny, my man, I'll give you a short rule to live by. Follow it, and it will be worth more than a gold mine to you. This is it,—When you have anything to do, *always do the best you can.*"

The next day, after dinner, his uncle gave Johnny and his brother Mark each a bed in the garden to weed. The boys had expected to spend the afternoon in play, and they didn't like to have to go to work. Mark pouted and fretted, and didn't half do his work. Johnny began in the same way; but presently he remembered his grandfather's rule. He resolved to act upon it. He left off pouting, and went to work in earnest. He did his best to weed his bed. After a while their uncle came out to see how the boys were getting on. Johnny had just finished when his uncle came along. He was so pleased to see how nicely his work was done, that he slipped a sixpence into his hand, and praised him for his diligence and carefulness in doing his work.

Then Johnny went off, and had a nice time at play, while Mark had to spend all the afternoon over his work.

Johnny said to himself,—"That's a good rule of grandfather's. When I've got anything to do, I'll always try and do my best."

When he was fifteen years old, he went to the academy. He did his best there; and before he had been there a year he had so good a character that the best merchant in the village offered him a situation in his warehouse. He carried his grandfather's rule with him there. He always did his best in the warehouse. When he was twenty-one, he was taken into the business. He went on doing his best, and became a rich man, whom everybody loved and honoured. By following his grandfather's rule, he made his fortune. But the rule which Johnny's grandfather gave him only taught the same lesson which the stars teach—a lesson of diligence. If we only mind this lesson we are sure to succeed, with God's blessing.

There was a poor boy in Scotland some years ago. He rose to be one of the most learned men in the world. He wrote the first book in the Arabic language that ever was printed in Scotland. And how do you think he ever got to be so famous? It was by learning the lesson of diligence, and by *practising* it. He always did the best he could, and this made him great. Let me show how he did this.

When he was a boy, he lived with an uncle who was so poor that he could hardly afford to buy a candle, or have any fire at night. It was only after the shop was shut up that this boy had any leisure. But he resolved to study, and try to get learning. Yet how could he study at night without any light?

The old proverb says, "*Where there's a will there's a way;*" and so it was here. This boy had a will to learn. But what was the way he found out? Singular enough. When he had no light at home in the evening, he used to take his book and go out into the streets, and stand by some shop-window and read by the light from the window. And sometimes, when the shops were all shut up before he got through, he would climb up a lamp-post, and would hold on by one hand while with the other he held his book in the light of the lamp. Surely *that* boy had learned the lesson of diligence. He did the best he could. We do not wonder to find that he became a learned man.

I have just one more story to tell, for the purpose of showing how much good comes from practising the lesson of diligence. There was a woman once who had charge of a large house in the country. She had got into very careless habits. Everything was going wrong about the house, and the farm too. She was in great trouble, and knew not what to do.

In the neighbouring village an old man lived in a cottage by himself, who was considered very wise. She went to him and told him all her troubles, and asked him to tell her what she should do to make things go on better at home. He heard her story, and asked her some questions, so as to find out just how matters stood. Then he asked her to wait a moment. He went into another room, and came back again by-and-by, bringing with him a curious-looking box, carefully sealed up.

"Here," said he, "take this box, and keep it for one year; and do with it just what I tell you, and I am sure you will find things greatly improving by the end of the year. What you are to do with the box is this:—Three times every day and three times every night you must carry it into the kitchen, and cellar, and the stable, and set it down in each corner. Do this faithfully; and be sure and bring the box back to me at the end of the year, and tell me how you are getting on. Good-bye."

The woman took the wonderful box, with many thanks, and carried it carefully home. She began at once to carry out the old man's directions about the box, and in doing this she soon found out what it was that made things go so badly. One day, on carrying the box into the cellar, she found one of the servants drinking beer; and she put a stop to that. Another day, in carrying the box into the kitchen, she found another of the servants giving away some tea and sugar to an acquaintance who had come to see her: she put a stop to this. Another day, when going into the stable with the box, she found the best cow left standing in the mire, and the horse left in the stall uncurried, and without any oats in the manger or any hay in the rack: she had these things stopped at once. And so she went on, finding something wrong all the time, and having it put right at once.

At the end of the year, faithful to her promise, she carried the wonderful box back to the old man. She told him what a surprising change it had brought

about in her house, and begged him to let her keep it longer.

"I can't let you keep the box any longer," said the old man, smiling; "but you can have the secret that is locked up in it." Then he opened the box; which contained nothing but a slip of paper, on which was written these two lines:—

> "If you would have things prosperous be,
> Yourself must every corner see."

All that the wise old man meant by the use of this wonderful box, was to teach this woman the lesson which the stars teach us by their order—that is, the lesson of diligence.

Now, we have spoken altogether of four things about the stars by which they praise God—namely, their number, their greatness, their distance, and their order. Of these last two, *distances* teach us a lesson of *fear* and a lesson of *courage*. The *order* of the stars teaches us a lesson of *obedience* and a lesson of *diligence*.

The stars are beautiful teachers. They have a quiet, gentle voice; or, as the Bible calls it, "a still, small voice." Let us listen to that voice whenever we look at them. It will teach us valuable lessons. It will whisper to us of God and his greatness, of Jesus and his love. The gracious Saviour who took little children up in his arms and blessed them, is the same who made the stars, and speaks to us through them. Whether we read of him in the Bible, or see him in the stars, let us hear his voice, and walk in his ways, and love and serve him with all our hearts. Then we on earth, like the stars in the sky, will always be praising God.

VI.

# How the Light Praises God.

"Praise Him,.....light."—Ps. cxlviii. 3.

IF you look at the whole of this verse, you will find that it reads in this way:—"Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light." But the word *and* may be put for the word *of* here. Then it will read:—"Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars *and* light." And then if we only take the first and last parts of this verse for our text, we have just these words,—"Praise Him,..... light." Now, David calls on the light to praise God, just as he had called on the sun and the moon and the stars to do so.

Light is the oldest thing in the world. If you read the first chapter of Genesis, you will find that when God was going to begin the great work of creation, the very first thing he did was to make light. Before he made the sun, or the moon, or the

stars, or the world in which we live, he said,—"Let there be light: and there was light." Afterwards he made the sun and the moon, to be the great light-givers to our world. And yet, though light is so old, though it was the very first thing that God made, we know very little about it. The wisest men in the world, and those who have studied it the longest, are not able to tell what light is. We know some of the things that light does, but this is all we know about it. We know what a fast traveller light is. We know that it flies along at the rate of twelve millions of miles in a minute. We know that though the sun is about ninety-five millions of miles distant from our earth, yet light can come here from the sun in a little more than seven minutes.

We know, too, that light is that which enables us to see things. I can see you, and you can see me. And what is it which enables us to do this? Light. We can see the blue sky, and the bright clouds, and the tall mountains, and the green fields, and the beautiful flowers. And what is it which enables us to see all these things? It is light. We could see nothing at all without light. How dark and desolate our world would be, if God should take away the light! But when we have said all this, we have only told what light *does*. We have not said what it is. I cannot tell you what light is, for the best of all reasons—because I do not know. I have seen it and felt it and known it every day since I was a child, and yet I cannot tell *what* it is.

But though we don't know what light is, and can't

give a correct definition of it, yet we know enough about *what* light does, and about the *way* in which it does it, to enable us to show how the light praises God. This is our subject to-day,—*How the light praises God.*

I wish to speak of *three* ways in which it does this.

*The first way of which I would speak, in which the light praises God, is by* SHOWING HIS KINDNESS.

If you have a friend who is all the time doing something that he knows will give you pleasure, and help to make you feel happy, wouldn't you say that he was very kind? Yes. And he would be showing his kindness by the things he was doing for you. Now, the light is such a friend. It is all the time doing something that is pleasant to us, and that helps to make us happy. God made it to do this, and it shows how kind he is.

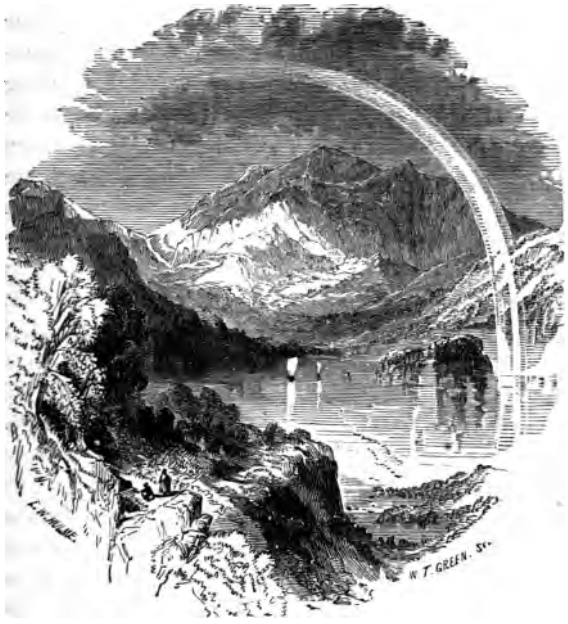
What is the colour of the sky? Blue. Is blue a pleasant colour to look at? Yes. What is the colour of the grass of the fields and the leaves of the trees? Green. Is green a pleasant colour? Yes. What is the colour of the rose? Red. Of the lily? White. Of the sunflower? Yellow. When you look at the flowers of the field, are there very many different colours there? Yes. Every colour you can name is found in some flower. Now, suppose that the sky, and the fields, and the trees, and the flowers, the clouds, and the mountains, and all the things we see, were of one colour; suppose they were all scarlet, or all white, or brown, or black—would this be pleasant?

No; it would be very unpleasant. Yet God might have made them so. But he has made them very different. We like to see a variety of colours. And what a wonderful variety God has made for us to look at! And all these beautiful colours, that we love so much to see, are made by the light. Here is a pink ribbon, and here is a blue one. If you were in a dark room, could you tell one from the other? No. Here is a piece of charcoal, and here is a piece of chalk. In a dark room could you see any difference between them? No. But the moment the light comes in we see the different colours which they put on. But it is the light that makes the difference in these colours. It is the light which makes the charcoal look black and the chalk look white. It is the light which makes one ribbon look pink and another blue.

You are ready to ask, *How* can it do this? Let me try and show you. You know the light that comes to us from the sun and moon is *white* light. But this white light is made up of seven different colours. If a girl has a doll, and doesn't know what it is made of, she can take it to pieces and find out. If a boy has a ball, and doesn't know what it is made of, he can take it to pieces in the same way and find out. And just so we can take the light of the sun to pieces, and find out what it is made of. It is easy to do this. Suppose we go into a room that has a window towards the west, where the sun is shining. We close the shutters. Now it is all dark. We bore a hole in the shutter big enough to put your finger in. A

beam of sunlight comes through that hole. Now suppose we have in our hands a three-cornered piece of glass, called a prism. We hold this piece of glass so that the sunbeam will fall upon it. When the sunbeam goes into the glass it is white light—made up, like the doll or the ball, of all that belongs to it. But in going through this glass the light is broken up and taken to pieces. It comes out, not white light any longer, but light of seven different colours—red, and orange, and yellow, and green, and blue, and indigo, and violet. These are the colours of the rainbow. And whenever the rainbow appears, this is the way in which it is made. God has been breaking up the light, and taking it to pieces to show us what it is made of. Instead of a glass such as I have spoken of, God makes use of the drops of falling rain to break up the light with, and show the different colours of which it is made. Yet still you ask: "Well, but *how* does the light that comes from the sun make all the many different colours that we see in the world around us?" It does it in this way: Some things have the power of absorbing or swallowing up a part of these different colours that make the light, and of giving back the rest; and the part that they give back is what gives them their colour. For example: Here is the piece of charcoal again. Its colour is black. What makes it black? It swallows up all the light that falls on it, and gives nothing back. This is what makes charcoal black. Here is the piece of chalk. It is white. What makes it white? It swallows up none of the light that falls

on it, but gives it all back, and this makes it white. Here is the pink ribbon again. What makes it pink?



THE RAINBOW.

It swallows up all the different colours of the light that falls upon it, except the pink. It gives this back, and so it has a pink colour. The blue ribbon swallows up all the other colours of the light except the blue. It gives this back, and this is the reason why its colour is blue. And this is the way in which the light makes all the different colours that we see.

We should be very thankful that God has made the light in the way that he has, out of so many different colours. If there was only one colour in the light—if there was nothing but white in it—then everything that swallowed up the light, as the charcoal does, would be black like the charcoal; and everything that reflected the light, or gave it back again, as the chalk does, would be white like the chalk. Here, then, would only be two colours. And the sky, the clouds, the trees, the fields, the flowers, and all things, would be either white or black. And when we see all the beautiful colours around us that are so pleasant for us to look at, and remember that it is the light which makes them all, we see how the light praises God by showing his kindness.

*The second way in which the light praises God, is by showing his* GENTLENESS.

The sunlight is one of the busiest and most important things in the world; and yet it is one of the quietest and gentlest that can be. Nothing would live without the light. Nothing would grow without the light. Nothing could be done without the light. The sunlight is engaged in carrying on a great many trades. It is busy in doing ten thousand things all the time; and yet it never makes the least noise about them. The sunlight is a great painter. It not only makes every picture taken in the photograph office, but it is busily engaged in painting all over the world. If you have a rosy cheek, the light painted it. If you have a bright sparkling blue or black eye,

THE RISING SUN.

the light gave it to you. And so it is the sunlight that paints the flowers, the trees, the clouds, and the beautiful sky. The sunlight is a great painter.

The sunlight is a great farmer. It is busy all over the world raising trees, and grain, and grass, and fruits, and flowers without any end. The sunlight is a housekeeper. It has a very large family to provide for. All the fish in the sea, all the birds in the air, all the beasts of the field, and all the men and women and children in the world, belong to this family. These all depend on the sunlight for their food. If the light were taken away, they would all die. And yet, though it is so busy, and has such a multitude of things to attend to, the light does its work in the quietest and gentlest way. You know how softly the snowflakes come falling down to the ground. But the light comes to us more softly and gently still. It creeps into our windows in the morning—oh, how quietly! Not the least noise attends its coming. If you kept your eyes shut, you would not know that it was coming at all. You know how quietly a little baby breathes, as it lies folded in its mother's arms. And yet, if you hold a feather, or a piece of fine gold leaf, before the baby's face, its breath, gentle as it is, will cause the feather, or the gold leaf, to shake very much. But the sunlight falls so gently that it will not stir them in the least. You know how tender the eye is. A tiny grain of sand cannot be put into it, the softest and most delicate finger cannot touch us, without giving us pain. But the rays of light are darting into our eyes all the time; they are striking

against them all over; and yet their touch is so soft and gentle that we never feel it.

And the important lesson which the sunlight teaches, is to be quiet and gentle in what we say and do. Some boys and girls seem to delight in keeping up a noise and confusion about them all the time. They speak as loud as if all the people around them were hard of hearing. They slam the doors; they upset things and knock them about, and never do anything without making a disturbance over it. What a lesson such persons may learn from the sunlight! The sunlight is God's servant. And we can judge of the Master by the servant. It is God who makes the sunlight to do its work so gently. God works himself in a quiet, gentle way; and he would have us learn to imitate him in this respect. And if we want to make ourselves useful, and to do good, we must learn this lesson of quiet gentleness which the sunlight teaches us. This is a very important lesson to learn. There is a wonderful power for doing good in gentle kindness. Let me show you how it works.

A rough-looking man brought his son into a school one day. Going up to the teacher, he said to him: "I have brought my boy here, and would like to see if you can do anything with him. I confess he is more than I can manage. Of all the stubborn boys I ever knew, I think he is the worst."

"Well," said the teacher, "that is a pretty bad account you give of him; but we'll see, sir, what can be done with him."

One day, not long after, as the teacher was going

through the school, he laid his hand kindly on this boy's shoulder, and was surprised to find him shudder and shrink away from his touch.

"What's the matter, Henry?" asked the teacher.

"I thought you were going to strike me, sir," said the boy.

"Why should I strike you?" he asked.

"Because I am such a bad boy."

"Who says you are a bad boy?"

"Father says I am a bad boy, and mother says so, and everybody says so."

"But you are not a bad boy; at least, you have not been so here. And you can be as good a boy as any one. Ask God to help you to be good, and you will be sure to succeed."

The poor boy's eyes filled with tears. It was the first time he had ever felt the power of gentleness, and it melted his heart at once. As the teacher turned away, the boy said to himself: "Can I be a good boy when everybody says I'm so bad? But he didn't say I was bad. He said I could be good. *I'll try.*"

From that day a change took place in him. He took great interest in his studies, and made good progress; his schoolfellows learned to love him. He grew up to be a great and good man, and became the governor of one of our largest States.

Some years ago there was a good man living in the city of Philadelphia, whose name was Isaac Hopper. He was a member of the Society of Friends. One day he met a coloured man, named Cain, in the street. He was a very wicked man, and at that time

he was swearing dreadfully. This grieved Friend Hopper greatly. So he stopped; and as it is against the law to swear, he had him taken before a magistrate and fined for swearing. He did this, not because he was angry with the coloured man, but because he hoped it would make him stop swearing. But he was mistaken in this.

A good while after this Friend Hopper met Cain again in the street. The poor fellow's looks showed that he had been growing worse instead of better. This made the kind-hearted Friend feel sorry. He stepped up to him, spoke kindly to him, and shook hands with him.

"Dost thou remember, Cain," said Mr. Hopper, "how I had thee fined some years ago for swearing?"

"Indeed I do. I remember what I paid as well as if it were only yesterday."

"Well, did it do thee any good?"

"No, never a bit; it only made me mad to have my money taken from me, and I swore more after it than before."

Mr. Hopper then paid the man back the amount of the fine, together with the interest due on it, saying, as he did so,—

"I meant it for thy good, friend Cain; and I am sorry I did thee any harm."

Cain's countenance changed. His voice choked so that he could not speak; but the big tears, rolling down his cheeks, showed how deeply he felt the power of this unexpected kindness. He took the

money very thankfully, became a quiet, civil man, and was never heard to swear again.

Let me give you one more example of the good effect of gentle kindness.

Little Charlie was the dullest boy in the school to which he went. The rest of the boys all laughed at him, and made fun of him. Even the teacher never did anything else than scold him and find fault with him. The consequence was that he became sulky and careless. He never really tried to learn his lessons, and of course he never did learn them. Charlie might have lived and died a dunce, and all for the want of a little gentleness in dealing with him.

But one day a gentleman, who had great faith in the power of kindness, was visiting the school. He walked round, and looked over some of the boys who were making their first attempt at writing. When he came to look at the queer, crooked marks on Charlie's book, the boys all set up a laugh. Poor Charlie blushed for shame, and held down his head, but said nothing.

"Never mind, my lad," said the gentleman, in a kind and cheering way; "don't be discouraged. Just try to do your best, and you'll be a writer some day. I remember, when I first began to write, being quite as awkward as you are. But I kept on trying; and now, look here." Then he took a pen and wrote his name on a piece of paper in a fine, clear, round hand, almost like printing. "See what can be done by trying," he added.

Many years afterwards Charlie met that gentleman

again. But in the meantime the stupid schoolboy, who couldn't learn to write, and who was laughed at by all his companions, had become a great and learned man. He thanked the gentleman for the kind little speech he made to him on the day when he visited the school. "*I owe all my success in life,*" said Charlie, "*to those kind words.*"

"Gentle words, how sweet they sound!
Joy they give to all around:
Words of love, what peace they bring!
Happiness to everything.

"Gentle words will reach the heart,
Balm to sorrow they impart;
Loving words are sweet to hear,
Joining hearts to others dear.

"Gentle words then freely give,
They will teach you how to live;
They to you are freely given,
Angels whisper them from heaven."

And when we remember how softly and quietly the light does its work, we see how it praises God, in the second place, by showing his *gentleness.*

*The third way in which the light praises God, is by showing* WHAT GOOD HE DOES WITH LITTLE THINGS.

Among all the great and powerful things that we know of, there is nothing greater or more powerful than light. And yet among all the little things that we know of, there is nothing less or more tiny than the particles of light. There are millions of them on the point of a needle when it is held in the sun-

shine. They are so little that they pass through our windows without breaking them. They are so little that millions of them enter our eyes without our feeling them. And yet, though they are so very little, they are just the things that God makes use of to do some of the greatest things that are ever done. Some of the works that the sunlight does are wonderful for their greatness. Just look at one or two of these.

*What a great work it is to make rain for the whole world!* All the men on the earth put together never could do it. The natives of Africa have men that they call "rain-makers." They have charms by which they pretend to make rain. But this is all nonsense. They only cheat the people. But the sunlight is a great rain-maker. It makes rain for the whole world. This light comes warm from the sun. It falls gently on the surface of the water in the oceans, and lakes, and rivers of the world. It warms the water—it turns it into vapour. This vapour floats away and makes clouds. These clouds sail about through the sky. By-and-by they get full of water, like a sponge. Then they pour out the water, and it comes down in soft and gentle showers of rain. And all this great work is done by those little tiny bits of light that come to us from the sun.

Look at another of the great works that the sunlight does. *What a great work it is when winter is changed into spring!* Think of how the earth looks in winter. The ground is covered with snow; the rivers are frozen up; the trees are bare, and the flowers are all gone. How dreary and dead things

look! What could you, or I, or all the people in the world, do to take winter away and make spring come in its place? We could do nothing. But God does it all by means of those tiny little bits of light. He sends them in great numbers warm from the sun. They melt the snow; they thaw out the frozen rivers; they soften the hard ground; they send the sap from the roots of the trees and plants up among the branches. The buds appear. They swell out and open; and presently leaves and flowers and fruit are seen again. This is a great and wonderful work. And yet God does it all, every year, by the help of things so very little as the tiny particles of light that come to us from the sun.

And if God makes use of such little things to help him in the world, we may be sure he will do the same in the Church. Nothing is too little for God to work with. He loves to work with little things. Let us look at some examples of the way in which God does this.

"Mother," said little Phœbe Cary, "have you nothing I can carry to poor Aunt Molly?"

This was an old woman who lived near them, who had long been confined to the house with sickness. But Phœbe's mother was herself very poor, and she then had really nothing in the house to send.

"I wish I had something to send," she said; "can you think of anything?"

"I've only a flower," said Phœbe; "I'll take her that."

She had a geranium which some one had given her.

It was in a flower-pot in their window; and as it grew and bore flowers, Phœbe and her mother had great pleasure in watching it every day. There were several beautiful red flowers on it now. So Phœbe plucked the nicest of them, and ran down with them to the poor old sick woman, who was suffering great pain.

PHŒBE AND THE FLOWERS.

In the afternoon a lady called to see Aunt Molly. She saw the beautiful flower in an old broken tumbler on a little stand by the side of the old woman, and she asked who brought it.

"A little girl who lives up the court brought it this morning, and said it was all she had to give," said Aunt Molly, looking up with a smile. "I'm

sure it's worth a great deal to me, for it shows that somebody thinks of me. And then, as I look at it, it reminds me of the green fields where I used to walk, and the flowers I used to pick there when I was young. Yes; and it makes me think what a wonderful God we have. And if a flower like this is not too little for him to make and take care of, I'm sure he won't forget a poor creature like me."

Tears came into the lady's eyes, and she said to herself: "How wonderfully God can make use of the smallest things to do good with, when he could make a simple flower, which that little child brought, the means of giving so much comfort to this poor, old, suffering creature!"

An elderly Christian woman, who was always trying to do good in some way, was going to church in London one Sunday evening. On her way she passed by a public garden, where people go to drink and smoke and find amusement. She saw a young man standing near the entrance to the garden. He seemed to be waiting for some one to join him before going in. As she came up to him she said, "I suppose you are waiting for some one, my young friend?"

"Yes, ma'am," said he; "I'm waiting for a companion who is going into the garden with me."

"Well, I'm going to church. Suppose you go with me, and hear my minister preach."

The young man went with her. The sermon he heard that night led him to become a Christian. He afterwards studied for the ministry, and went out to preach the gospel to the heathen. This young man

was John Williams, the celebrated missionary to the South Sea Islands. He was one of the best and most useful men who ever lived. He built a vessel with his own hands; and then he went, like an angel of mercy, from one group of islands to another, and was the means of turning multitudes of people from their dumb idols to worship the living God. What a little thing it was when that good lady asked that young man to go to church with her! And yet here we see how much good God was pleased to do by means of that little thing.

What a little thing a door-scraper is! Yet God made use of a door-scraper once to do a great deal of good with. Listen while I tell you how it happened.

A young man who was engaged to teach a school in a small village was very much annoyed to find how much mud and dirt the boys brought into the schoolroom on their shoes, so he got a piece of an iron hoop to make a scraper. He fastened one end of it to the door-step, and set the other end on a stake which he drove into the ground. This made a good scraper. He asked the boys to use it. It was a new thing. The boys liked it, and scraped away as if their lives depended on it. That day there was much less dirt in the school than usual. Then the teacher got a mat for the boys to wipe their feet on after scraping them. They began to take a pride in having their schoolroom look clean and tidy. This encouraged the teacher, so that he had the floor scrubbed. This made such a change in the look of

the room, that the scholars hardly knew it the next time they came in.

Among the scholars was a little boy named Freddy. His parents were poor, they had a large family, and everything about the house was very dirty. When the teacher put a scraper at the schoolhouse, Freddy thought it would be very well to have one at home. He found an iron hoop on his way home from school one day, and that afternoon he fixed a scraper at their door-step. When his father came home with muddy feet, he saw the scraper, and cleaned his boots before he went in.

After this, Freddy managed to get a sheep's skin for a door-mat.

The first step in the road to neatness generally leads to others. Freddy's father got some lime, and whitewashed the walls of their cottage. Then his mother gave the floor a good scrubbing. With white walls and a clean floor, the old tin pans and cooking-vessels looked black and dingy; so these were scoured up, and made to look almost as good as new. They then had a nice new cupboard made to keep them in. Then the mother thought, as they were too poor to buy a carpet, the floor would look much better if it were painted. So Freddy went off to a carriage-maker in the village to ask how much the paint would cost. This man knew Freddy. In talking with him he found out all about the scraper, and what it led to. He told him he would give him the paint, if he would put up a scraper at his door just like his own.

"Thank you, sir," said Freddy; "then mother can take the money and buy the Bible."

"What Bible?" he asked.

"A Bible to read at home, night and morning, just as our teacher does. I shall be so glad when I get it."

"Why," said the painter, "your mother need not buy a Bible. I have some to give away. She can have one for nothing. And you can take it home with you, if you won't spill any paint on it."

So Freddy got the paint and the Bible, and went home, feeling happier than a king. And then the floor was painted and the Bible was read. Reading the Bible led them to go to church, and going to church led them to become Christians. And thus a home was made bright and happy, and the souls of those who lived there were saved. How much good there was here! And *all this came of a door-scraper!*

I will give you one more example, to show how much good God can do by means of little things. A wonderful deal of good often comes from what Solomon calls "a word fitly spoken." The Hebrew for "fitly spoken" here means "set on wheels." All our words are set on wheels. If they are good words, they go wheeling on for good; if they are evil words, they go wheeling on for evil. Remember this!

One day a boy was tormenting a kitten. His little sister, with her eyes full of tears, said to him, "O Philip, don't do that! It is God's kitten."

That word of the little girl was not lost. It was set on wheels. Philip left off tormenting the kitten,

but he couldn't leave off thinking about what his sister had said.

"God's kitten, God's creature; for he made it," he said to himself. "I never thought of that before."

The next day, on his way to school, he met one of his companions beating unmercifully a poor half-starved looking dog. Philip ran up to him, and before he knew it, was using his sister's words, saying, "Don't, don't do that, Ned! It's God's creature."

The boy looked ashamed, and tried to excuse himself by saying that the dog had stolen his dinner.

"Never mind," said Philip; "you shall have half of mine." So they went on their way to school together, and soon forgot all about the dog.

But Philip's words had been set on wheels again, and much good was to follow from them.

Two persons were passing just as Philip spoke, and they heard his words. One was a young man in prosperous business in a neighbouring town; the other was a dirty, ragged, miserable-looking creature. He had got into the habit of drinking, and in consequence of this had just been dismissed by his employer, and was going home feeling very unhappy and despairing. "God's creatures!" said the poor fellow; and it seemed a new idea to him too. "If that dog is God's creature, then *I'm* God's creature too; and *he* will help me, if no one else will."

Just then he came to the tavern where he had been in the habit of wasting his money, and then going home to abuse his family. He stopped a moment—

the temptation was very strong to go in; but the new thought was stronger. "No, I'm God's crea-

A PAINFUL SCENE.

ture," he said to himself; "I'll go in there no more." And he went on towards home.

His wife was astonished to see him come home sober, and still more when he burst into tears, say-

ing that he was a ruined man, but was determined to give up drinking, and try, by God's help, to be a better man.

Just then a knock was heard at the door. It was the gentleman of whom we have just spoken. He had heard Philip's words too. They were words on wheels to him. They went rolling after him. He could not get away from them.

"This is one of God's creatures too," he said to himself, as he looked at the poor ragged man who was walking before him. "He looks as if he needed help," he went on to say; "and perhaps I can give it to him." This led him to follow the poor man to his home. He offered him work. This was thankfully received and faithfully done. The poor fellow kept his good resolution. He never was found in the tavern again, but became a sober, industrious, useful, happy man. And the simple words which that little girl set on wheels when she spoke to her brother, were the means of doing all this good.

And so we have spoken of three ways in which the light praises God. The first is by showing his kindness, the second is by showing his gentleness, and the third is by showing what good he does with little things.

Let us think of these things when we see the light. Let us learn the lesson of kindness and gentleness which God teaches us every morning, as the light spreads itself so softly and beautifully around; and, above all, let us be encouraged to try and make ourselves useful by remembering what use God

makes of little things. A widow's mite, a kind word, a pleasant look, a cup of cold water given to one of the least of his servants—these are little things. They are within the reach of us all; and God can own them, and bless them, and make them the means of doing much good.

"Do thy little: God hath made
Million leaves for forest shade;
Smallest stars their glory bring;
God employeth everything.
Do thy little: even now,
Ere cold death-dews clasp thy brow;
Ere has fled the vital breath,
Cold and damp the sweat of death.

"Then the little thou hast done—
Little battles thou hast won,
Little masteries achieved,
Little wants with care relieved,
Little words in love expressed,
Little wrongs at once confessed,—

"These shall crown thy dying head,
Holy light upon thee shed;
These are treasures that shall rise
Far beyond the smiling skies.

"For, oh! thy recompense shall be
To hear what Jesus says of thee
Echoed through eternity—
'Thy littles were all done for Me.'"

VII.

# How the Air Praises God.

"Praise Him in the firmament of His power."—Ps. cl. 1.

FIRMAMENT is a big word. But it is easy to find out what it means. In the first chapter of Genesis, verse 6th, when God was making our world, he said, "Let there be a firmament." A firmament means something spread out. There are several other names by which the firmament is called. Sometimes it is called the atmosphere. But this word is just as big as the other, and just as hard to understand. There are two other names by which the firmament is sometimes called. These are, both of them, shorter and easier to understand. It is sometimes called the sky, and sometimes the air. Sky is a nice little word. We all know what the sky means. But there is one objection to this. It seems like something that is a long way off from us. But it is different when we speak of the air. This, we know, is

about us. It is in the street. It is in our houses. It comes through the doors and windows when opened. It rushes in at the keyhole when the door is shut. It finds its way through the crack in the window. The air is round about us all the time. It seems like an old friend. But these four words—firmament, and atmosphere, and sky, and air—all mean the same thing. We can take any of them that we please when we are going to talk about that which they all represent. I think the last of the four is the simplest—the air.

In the text David speaks of the firmament, the sky, or the air, as the place of God's power. When the air is calm and still, it doesn't seem to have much power. Then it appears to be as gentle as the breath of a sleeping infant. It will go so softly over the surface of a lake as hardly to ruffle its waters at all. But look at it when the storm or the tempest stirs it. Oh, how different it is then! It goes howling over the earth like an angry giant. It lashes the ocean into foam and fury. It makes its waters roar with a noise like thunder. It sets its great waves to rising and rolling like living mountains. It tosses the largest ships about like corks. It tears up the tallest trees by their roots, or snaps their great, strong trunks as easily as you or I could snap in two a pipe-stem. And when we see it acting in this way, we need not wonder to find David speaking of the firmament, or the air, as the place where God's power lies. And when he tells the firmament, or the air, to praise God, he means to teach us that this is what

the air does. It praises God. It was made to do this, and this is what it does. This is what we are to talk about now. Our sermon to-day is about *how the air praises God.*

There are many ways in which it does this. If I should attempt to speak of them all, it would take a long time. But I will only speak of *three* ways in which the air glorifies God. But before going on to speak of these, perhaps it would be well to stop a moment and say something about what this air is. It is a kind of gas which God has made to hang all round our world. This is just the meaning of the word "atmosphere," one of the four words that we spoke of as meaning the same thing as air.

The word "atmosphere" is an English word made up out of two Greek words. The Greek word for *atmos* means air, or vapour. The Greek word for *sphere* means a round world, or globe. And when we put these two words together, they make our word atmosphere. The meaning of this is the *world of air.* God has made a great world or ocean of air, and put our earth right in the middle of it. You know when a chestnut falls from the tree there is a great burr all round it, and the nut lies stored away in the middle of this burr. You know, too, that the cocoa-nut, as it grows on the tree, has a great thick husk all round it. The cocoa-nut grows and ripens in the middle of that husk. And just so this ocean of air surrounds our world on every side. It is about fifty miles deep. If we could go straight up in the sky from where we live for about fifty miles,

we should get to the outside of this ocean. We should come to a place where there is no air. We can *see* the air. It has colour. We can't see it in the room where we are; it has no colour here that we can notice. But look at the sky. What is its colour? Blue. Yes; but it is the air which gives it that colour. And in this way we know that the air has colour, and that this colour is blue. We can *feel* the air, as well as see it. If you spread out your fingers, and swing your hand up and down, or backwards and forwards, you will feel something rushing through your fingers. This is the air that you feel. When you have been swinging under a tree in summer time, you have felt something rushing by you as you have gone rapidly up and down. This was the air that you felt.

And then the air can be *weighed*, as well as seen and felt. If you measure a square inch in the palm of your hand, and then hold out your hand, the weight of the air on that square inch is fifteen pounds. You may say you don't feel the weight of it. No. The reason of this is that the air is underneath your hand, and all round it, pressing in the same way. This is why you don't feel the weight of it. If you could stretch out your hand in a place where there was no air underneath it, but only on the upper side, it would be like having more than a hundred pounds weight put on your hand. You would not be able to hold it up for a moment. If all the air could be taken out from the inside of this building, the weight of the air on the outside would break all the windows,

and crush in the walls, and make the roof fall in a moment. But the building is full of air. There is as much pressure inside as there is outside, and so it stands safely.

Now, it is of this ocean of air around us and our world of which we are to speak. We are to show three ways in which the air praises God.

*In the first place, then, the air praises God by* SPREADING LIGHT.

We have spoken before of how the light praises God. The air and the light work together in doing this. They are like partners in the same branch of business. *Air, Light, and Company* are a firm that do an immense amount of business all over the world. One of them could not do much without the other; but when they unite and work together, as they always do, it is wonderful how much good they do. The sun gives the light, and the air spreads it, or scatters it abroad. If it were not for the air, we should have no light except when we were where the sun could shine directly upon us. Here we are in this building. The sunbeams are not shining in through the windows, and yet there is light all through the building, in every part of it. It is the air which brings this light to us. It catches the light from where the sunbeams shine over yonder, and scatters it abroad. If it were not for the air, it would be dark as midnight all around us here.

In the hot summer days, when the sun is shining fiercely on one side of the street and not on an-

other, you know how pleasant it is to get out of the sun's heat, and walk along in the cool shade on the other side of the street. But if it were not for the air, the very moment we passed out from the blazing rays of the sun we should plunge into midnight darkness. If you were sitting in a room where the sun could shine just in the place where you were, and nowhere else, then you would have light, while the other persons in the room would be in total darkness.

Now, when night comes on, we can light our gas, our lamps, or candles, or sit by a blazing fire, and have a very comfortable light. But even this we owe to the air. If it were not for its kind assistance, neither gas, nor lamp, nor candle, nor fire would burn. We never should have a single ray of light except when we were in the direct beams of the sun. But now we have light in the morning coming gradually to us long before the sun rises; we have light in the evening, lingering long and beautifully in the sky after the sun has gone down; and we have light in places where the sun is not shining,—because the air is busy all the time in catching the light as it comes from the sun, and scattering it abroad. And when we think how useful it is to us to have light where the sun is not shining directly, and how much comfort and happiness it brings to us, we see that one of the ways in which the air praises God is by spreading light.

And we may learn a good lesson from this part of our subject. In the Church, Jesus is to us what the sun is in the natural world. The truth of the Bible

is the light which shines from this Sun, and the people of Christ are intended by him to do just the same thing in the Church that the air does in the world,—they are to spread the light. We can do this by our examples when we try to be like Jesus, or by our words when we speak about him.

A young man came to see me one day about joining the Church. In talking with him, I asked him what first led him to think of becoming a Christian. "I was spending a week some time ago," said he, "in Mr. A.'s family. He has a sister who has been confined to her bed for years by a complaint which causes her very great suffering. Yet she is so bright, and cheerful, and happy, because she loves Jesus, that I am sure it must be a blessed thing to be a Christian, and I am resolved to try and be one."

Now you see how that Christian woman was spreading light by her example as she lay on her sick-bed.

A young man was going to be ordained to the ministry some time ago. In talking to a friend on the morning of his ordination, he said,—"Several years ago, I gave up going to church, and began to doubt whether the Bible was true. The only thing that kept me from becoming an infidel was the example of my father." That father was an humble, earnest Christian. He lived like Jesus. By his beautiful example he was spreading the light of the gospel around the path in which his son was walking. That light kept the young man from becoming an infidel. It led him to become a Christian, and then a minister.

Some years ago, there lived a gentleman in New York whose name was Mr. Astor. He was worth many millions of dollars, and was considered at that time the richest man in the country. One day a friend was talking with him about his money, and asked him if it made him happy.

"Ah, no!" said Mr. Astor; "I must leave all my money behind me when I die. It won't keep away trouble; it won't buy off sickness; it won't buy off death. No, sir, my money does not make me happy."

Soon after this the same gentleman went to see a poor old woman whom he knew. She was lame. She lived in one small room, and earned part of her living by knitting; for the rest, she had to depend on the kindness of her friends. He asked her the same question that he had asked Mr. Astor—"Lydia, are you happy?"

"Happy!" she said, as her face all brightened up; "I am just as full of happiness as I can be. I don't believe I could hold another drop."

"But how is this?" asked the gentleman. "You are sick, and alone, and have almost nothing to live on."

"Ah! yes," she said; "but you forget those sweet promises in that blessed book," pointing to her Bible: "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. And again, Ask, and receive, that your joy may be full."

Oh, how beautifully this poor woman was spreading the light! She did it by her words, as well as by her example. Let us try to do it in the same way. Then we shall be learning from the air how

to praise God. The first way in which the air praises God is by spreading light.

*The second way in which the air does this is*—BY SUPPORTING LIFE.

The life of our bodies depends on the air. And so does the life of all other animals. And the trees, the plants, and the flowers of the earth all depend on the air to make them live and grow, just as much as our bodies do. In making the air that we breathe, God has put something into it that it is necessary for our bodies to have in order that they may live and grow, and be strong and well. And when we breathe the air into our lungs, it stays there just long enough to have that part of it taken out which our bodies need, and then it is breathed out again.

Sometimes we hear of persons being smothered. This means either that their faces were covered up, or that they were shut up in a close place, so that they could get no fresh air, and this killed them.

If we put a plant or a flower into a jar without air, it will wither and die.

This proves how necessary air is to support life. But God has made plenty of air to supply the wants of all the people, and all the trees, and plants, and flowers in the world. And when he makes the wind blow, it carries the air about all over the world. It comes sweeping through our streets, and rushing into our houses, so that we can have plenty to breathe both by day and by night. And as we breathe the air our lives are supported by it.

And it is just the same with vegetables as with animals. The wind rushes through our orchards and forests. It stirs the leaves of the trees, and makes them rustle. The leaves are to the trees just what our lungs are to our bodies. The trees and plants breathe through their leaves, and get supplies of fresh air in that way just as we do through our lungs. And so it is with the grass and the flowers. They all depend on the air to keep them alive. And when we know that the air is engaged all the time in doing so important a work as this, we may well say that it praises God by supporting life.

And now you may ask the question, Is there any lesson for us to learn here? Certainly there is. There is something just as necessary to support the life of our souls as the air is to support the life of our bodies. And this thing, so important to the life of our souls, is *the truth of the gospel.* This truth is very different from the air in some things. For instance, the air can help to support our bodies while they are alive; but can it make them alive when dead? No. All the air in the world could never make one tiny little dead fly alive. But the truth of the gospel is able to make dead souls alive, as well as to support them when alive. This is the chief means that God employs for making dead souls alive. Our souls are all dead when we are born into this world. They continue dead till we become Christians. But the apostle James tell us it is by "the word of truth" that we are born again, and made alive as Christians (James i. 18).

And there is another difference between the air which supports the life of our bodies and the gospel which supports the life of our souls. The air comes to us of itself. God makes it go wherever he wants it to go, without any help from us. But it is different with the gospel. It does not go of itself. When it comes to us, and makes us Christians, Jesus expects us to carry it to others. This is what he means when he says, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*" And when we preach, or teach, or speak about the truth of the gospel, or when we give our money to send the Bible or the missionary to those who do not know and love Jesus, then we are doing for the souls of men what the air does for their bodies when it goes flying round the world. It is supporting life, and so praising God.

Let us take one or two examples of the way in which this may be done.

A good man, in great trouble of mind, was going to church one Sunday morning. On the way he overtook a pious old man who belonged to the same church, and was going there too. He had a New Testament in his hand. "Good morning, my friend," said the man in trouble; "what are you doing?"

"I am reading *my Father's Will*, as I walk along to church."

"Ah, indeed," said the other; "and what has he left you?"

"Why, he has promised to give me a hundredfold more in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting."

These words were to this troubled man like a draught of cool fresh air to one who was fainting. They comforted his heart, and drove away his fear. So, like the air, that Christian man was the means of supporting the life of his friend's soul by the words that he spoke.

A minister, who lived near the sea-shore, was preaching one day to a congregation in which were several sailors who had just been shipwrecked, and narrowly escaped drowning. He spoke of the danger to which our souls are exposed of being lost for ever on account of our sins, and compared sinners to drowning men, who catch at anything to save them. Then he compared Jesus to a plank floating on the waters for the drowning men to lay hold of. He told them how safe those were who laid hold of this plank, for, "O my friends," said he, "*this plank bears, this plank bears!*"

One of those sailors was converted by the sermon he heard that day. Fourteen years afterwards, the minister was called to see a dying sailor. It was the same man who had been led to become a Christian by the sermon just spoken of. He thanked the minister for that sermon, and especially for what he said about Jesus as "the plank that bears." "Those words," said he, "have been a great comfort to me ever since. And now I die in peace, because I know that '*this plank bears.*'"

Those were the last words he spoke. Clinging closely to this plank, he was landed safely on the heavenly shore, beyond the reach of storms or dangers.

And here we see how that good minister, like the air, was supporting life when he preached Jesus to those sailors, and spoke of him as "the plank that bears."

A sea-captain once stood up in a prayer-meeting in New York to say a few words about the benefit of prayer, and the importance of working as well as praying. "Let me tell you a little story of what once happened to me," said he. "This will illustrate them both at the same time.

"We were overtaken by a severe gale, and were in very great danger. The wind blew a perfect hurricane, and in the midst of this our ship sprung a leak. The water was rushing in on us rapidly. It seemed as if we must certainly go down in a short time. The men worked hard at the pumps. Still the water gained on us. Death stared us in the face. I ran down into the cabin, and offered a short prayer to Jesus to save us. The Bible was lying on my table. I opened it to see if I could find something to comfort me. My eye rested on these words:—

"'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness' (Isaiah xli. 10).

"I closed the Bible, and said, 'Thank God. That's enough.' I ran up on deck and told the men what I had been doing, and the sweet words I had just read in God's blessed Book. I said, 'Men, I don't think we are going down this time. I feel sure God will help us. But then we must help ourselves all we can.

Now, my lads, let's *pump and pray, and pray and pump.*'

"And they did it with a will; and, by God's help, we pumped and prayed our vessel safe into Cork harbour." The captain finished his little speech by saying,—"When there's a leak in a ship, and the storm is beating upon her, what is the use of pumping without praying—and what is the use of praying without pumping?"

Here we see how this good captain was supporting the life of his own soul by prayer and that sweet promise in the Bible; and then by his example, and the words he spoke to the sailors, we see how he was the means of supporting the lives of those about him.

The second way in which the air praises God is by supporting life.

*The third way in which the air praises God is*—BY CARRYING SOUNDS.

You see your teacher sit in your class with his scholars around him. You see his lips move. He is speaking to you. He is making words by the motion of his lips. Those words drop from his lips as he makes them. But did you ever think, and ask yourself the question, "How do those words get from the lips of my teacher into my ears?" And now, here in church, I am standing in the pulpit and speaking to you. But how do the words that I speak ever get into your ears, and into the ears of all the people present? What is it which carries these words? It is the air. All the sounds that we hear are first *made*

by means of the air, and then are *carried* by the air. If it were not for the air, we never could make a sound of any kind. If I clap my hands together, it makes a loud, sharp sound. But if there were no air about me, I might clap my hands till I was tired and it wouldn't make the least noise. If there were no air about me, I might keep moving my lips as I am doing now, but I should be unable to speak, or you to hear, a single word. If there were no air in this church, we might stand up and try to sing one of our sweetest hymns, but it would be impossible for us to raise a single note. The organist might sit in front of yonder organ; he might pull out all the stops, and run his hand over all the keys, but there would be no wind in the bellows, and not a sound would that organ make. The Statehouse bell, and all the bells in the city, might be rung; but if there were no air in the city, those bells would not be able to make the least noise.

It is the air that *makes* sounds, and that *carries* sounds when they are made. A wonderful carrier of sounds the air is. It carries sounds of every kind. If you have a secret that you want to whisper very softly into the ear of a friend, the air will carry that whisper for you. And if you see a blind man walking near the edge of a precipice, without knowing his danger, and you wish to save him from being dashed to pieces, you raise your warning voice and cry out, "Stop! stop! there's danger before you!" And instantly the air carries your loud warning to him. And when we think how much enjoyment we have from the pleasant sounds

that we hear; as we think of the gentle sighing of the wind in summer; of the beautiful songs of the birds among the trees of our groves and forests; of the sweet music of the brooks as their waters go murmuring or babbling by; when we think of the tender and loving voices of those who are dear to us, and then remember that we should lose all this pleasure at once if the air were taken away from us, or if it had not the power of bringing these sweet sounds to us, we see how true it is that the air praises God by carrying sounds.

And we may learn a lesson from the air by trying to praise God, and do good to others in the same way. The Bible teaches us that "faith cometh by hearing." This means that men are saved by the words they hear from the Bible. And the Bible also teaches us that, when we ourselves have heard about Jesus and heaven, we should speak to others of these things. We should carry the sound to them. That is what is meant when it says, "Let him that heareth say, Come" (Rev. xxii. 17). And we never can tell how much good we may do by simply carrying the sounds of God's loving and gracious words to men.

A Christian father, who lived in very comfortable circumstances in one of the New England states, had a son who turned out very badly. He disgraced himself, and brought shame and trouble on his family by his bad conduct. Like the prodigal son, he left his father's house and went into a far country. He wandered away to California. Then he went further and further in wickedness. He became intemperate

and a gambler. He plunged into wickedness of every kind. For years his father had never heard from him.

One day a friend of the father was going out to California. He said to his friend, "If you should meet my poor boy, *tell him his father loves him still.*"

While he was in California, this friend made many inquiries about the young man. For a long time he could hear nothing of him. At last he found out where he was. One night he went to see him in the wretched place of sin where he was spending most of his time. He called him out and said to him, "John, I am very sorry to find you in such a place as this. I bring a message from your father. He wished me to tell you that *he loves you still.*"

The hard heart of the wicked wanderer melted under those words of kindness. Like the prodigal, he said to himself, "I will arise and go to my father." He did so. He was kindly received. He became a changed man. That loving message from a kind and tender father saved him. And that friend, who carried the sound of his father's words of love, was the means of saving that young man.

And this is just what God wants us to do. He is a loving Father. He has many children in this sinful world who have gone astray from him. But he loves them still. Jesus came down from heaven to assure us of this love. He died to prove this love, and show how great it is. And the message he wants us to carry to those about us is, not a

message of anger or wrath, but a message of love. Your Father in heaven loves you still, and wants you to come back to him. This is a precious message to hear. Let us carry the sound of it wherever we go.

And we need not wait till we grow up to carry the sound of God's Word. Children can do this as well as men and women.

Some time ago, two little boys, who had been skating at the Central Park in New York, were going home. They were very merry, and, boy-like, as they stopped to play in front of a small house on their way to the cars, they made considerable noise. Just then a gentleman stepped out of the house, and speaking to them kindly, said, "Boys, won't you please to be a little quiet? There is a poor woman in this house very sick, near to death, and I'm afraid your noise will disturb her."

Of course the boys complied with this request so kindly made, and stopped their noise at once. They were Sunday-school boys. They had a good, faithful teacher, and they understood very well how men are to be saved.

As they walked quietly away, one of them said to the other, "Charlie, I wonder if she is ready to die? Let's go back and see."

Charlie agreed to go, and they went back. They got close up to the house, and were just going to ring the bell, when their courage failed, and they started to go home again. But they were not satisfied with themselves. They agreed to return and go up the

alley, and see if they could get in from the back part of the house.

They did go back, and were soon in the yard behind the house. The first story was level with the yard, so that one standing there could look right into the window. Charlie looked in through a broken pane, and saw a screen at the foot of the bed on which the sick woman was lying. Then he put his mouth close up to this opening, and cried out in a loud, clear voice, "Sick woman, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Then they both ran away.

Now it so happened that this sick woman was a Christian. But just at that time she was very much troubled in her mind. Satan had been tempting her, and trying to make her think that she was such a poor, good-for-nothing creature, and had been of so little use to anybody, that it was impossible for her to be saved. She started when she heard Charlie's voice. As she told a friend afterwards, "It seemed to her like the voice of an angel." And those words from the Bible which that voice uttered were just the words that she most needed to hear. They drove away all her doubts and fears, and made her feel perfectly comfortable and happy.

Those little boys, when they spoke to that poor woman, were carrying sounds as the air does. And they did great good by the sounds which they carried. There is wonderful power in God's Word to do good. There is power in it to give life. There is power in it to give comfort, to impart blessing, and to do good in many ways. Then let us try to praise God as the

air does, by carrying the sound of his Word, as we have opportunity.

We have spoken of three ways in which the air praises God—by spreading light; by supporting life; and by carrying sounds. Let us try to imitate the air in these ways, and then we shall be all the time praising God, and doing good to those about us.

VIII.

# How the Clouds Praise God.

"The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."—Exod. xvi. 10.

THIS refers to a particular cloud, different from those we see in the sky every day. The children of Israel were in the wilderness at the time to which these words refer. They had left Egypt, had crossed the Red Sea, and were now travelling on towards Canaan—the land which God had promised to give them. But they did not know the way in which they were to go. There were no turnpike-roads across that desert; no finger-boards were to be seen, pointing out the direction in which they were to go; and no milestones telling them how far they had come. But God promised to be their guide, and show them the road along which they were to travel. And the way in which he guided them was by means of a cloud which they could see. This was not a common cloud, but a miraculous one. I sup-

pose it looked just like some of the clouds that we see in the sky every day; but it did not move about as they do. It was a cloud which God made on purpose to guide the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness. He hung it up in the air, directly over the tabernacle. This tabernacle was the church, made like a great tent, in which the Jews used to worship God while they were in the wilderness. Just so long as God wanted them to stay in any one place, he caused this cloud to come low down and hang right over the tabernacle. When he wanted them to move on to some other place, he caused this cloud to rise slowly up in the air, till it was high enough for all the people to see it. Then he made it go before them, and move slowly along in the direction in which he wanted them to go. It was like the chariot in which God was riding to show them the way. Just so long as that cloud kept moving, the people moved after it. Wherever the cloud went they followed it; and whenever the cloud stopped they stopped.

As soon as their tents were pitched, and the tabernacle set up in the middle of their encampment, the cloud came and settled down right over it again. In the daytime it looked like a white fleecy cloud; but when night came on with its darkness, the cloud grew bright, and shone like a great lamp or fire, giving light to the people in their tents.

When God had anything to say to Moses, the great leader of the people, he always spoke to him

from the midst of this cloud. On these occasions God made the cloud look different from what it did at other times. Instead of the dull white appearance which it generally had, it grew bright, and sparkled, just as we sometimes see a cloud do when the sun is hidden behind it. This is what is meant when it says in our text—"*The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.*" When Moses saw this, he knew that God had something to say to him; and he went into the tabernacle, and listened reverently while God talked to him out of the cloud. *That* was a wonderful cloud; and we see now what is meant when it says, "The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."

But then it is true that "the glory of the Lord appears" in every cloud that floats in the sky. The clouds are all the time doing things by which they praise God, or make his glory appear. Our sermon to-day is about the ways in which they do this. The subject we are to speak about now is *how the clouds praise God.* I wish to speak of *three* things which the clouds give us, and by which they praise God.

*In the first place, they do this by giving us* BEAUTIFUL PICTURES.

It is very interesting to go through a gallery of pictures, and see how many beautiful things painters can put on canvas. But God is the greatest painter that ever was. With the sunshine and the clouds, he is painting all the time, and making most beauti-

ful pictures. When you look up into the bright blue sky, on a clear summer's day, and see afar off great masses of white fleecy clouds piled up against the sky like the snowy mountains in Switzerland, what a beautiful picture it makes! But those clouds do not stand still, like the snowy Alps. No; but instead of this we see them sailing quietly and gracefully across the dark blue heavens, like a moving pano-

THE SUN'S RAYS.

rama. The picture is changing all the time, but it is all the time beautiful.

And when the sun is rising or setting, and its rays come shining and sparkling through the great masses of clouds that hang around it, how charming it is! The blue and the purple and the golden colours, how sweetly they mingle all together,—and what a pleasure it is to stand and look at them!

How often, in the summer-time, I have sat under the shade of a tree in the country, and watched the

VARIED APPEARANCE OF THE CLOUDS.

clouds as they have gone slowly sailing along the sky! "There," I have sometimes said to myself, "see how much those clouds look like a castle, with its walls and towers! Those look like a great city, with its fine houses and its tall steeples pointing to the sky. There are some that look just like a forest of large trees; and there again are others that look like an army marching to battle." It gives us great pleasure to see so many beautiful things made by the clouds in the sky.

God might have made our world without any clouds. Astronomers, who look at the moon through their great telescopes, tell us that there are no clouds in the moon. What a loss it would be to us if we could never see the beautiful clouds that float through the sky any more. And so, every time we lift our eyes up to the clouds, as they arrange themselves in forms and shapes so pleasant to look at, we can see how the clouds praise God by giving us beautiful pictures.

But how do the clouds make those beautiful pictures? They do it by reflecting, or throwing back, the light of the sun. It is this which makes the clouds look so beautiful. And this teaches us a very important lesson. It shows us how we can make ourselves look beautiful.

Jesus is the "Sun of our souls." He is the most beautiful of all beings. The Bible says he is "*the chiefest among ten thousand*," *and* "*altogether lovely.*" And just as the sun shines on the clouds in the sky and makes them look beautiful, so when we become

Christians, and learn to be like Jesus, he shines on our souls and makes them look beautiful.

We sometimes hear people say of a certain thing, that "it is as ugly as sin." There is a great deal of meaning in this. Sin is the ugliest thing in the universe. A sinful soul must be an ugly soul. When the soul goes out of the body, we cannot see it; but while the soul is in the body it shines through the face. A sinful soul—a soul that is proud, or selfish, or angry—will make the face look ugly. A holy soul—a soul that loves Jesus, and is gentle, and patient, and kind—will make the face look beautiful. This is true, and nobody can prevent it.

My friend, the Rev. Dr. Buddington, of Brooklyn, N.Y., told me that a young woman came to see him once about joining his church. He asked her what made her first think of wanting to be a Christian. She said it was because she found she was growing so ugly. She looked in the glass one day when she was very angry, and was fairly frightened to see how ugly she looked. She found that the bad temper she was giving way to was making ugly marks upon her face. She was afraid to think what this would grow to by-and-by. This led her to think what a dreadful thing sin must be. Then she prayed to Jesus to take away her sin and make her a Christian. This young woman was right. What she said was true. There is nothing that will help to make us look ugly sooner than giving way to bad temper. And if we want to make ourselves look beautiful, there is no better way than by trying to be like Jesus.

There was a dispute between three ladies once, about which of them had the most beautiful hand. One sat by a stream and dipped her hand into the water, and held it up; another plucked strawberries until the ends of her fingers were pink; and the third gathered violets until her hands were fragrant from the flowers. A poor old woman passing by said, "Please give me something, for I am poor." But they all refused to give her anything. Another woman sat near. She had not washed her hand in the stream, nor stained it with fruit, nor adorned it with flowers, but she pitied the poor woman, and gave her some relief. Then the old woman asked what was the dispute between them. They told her, and then lifted up before her their beautiful hands. "Beautiful indeed they are," she said, when she saw them. Then they asked her which was the most beautiful. Her answer was this: "It is not the hand that is washed clean in the brook; it is not the hand that is tipped with red; it is not the hand that is garlanded with fragrant flowers; but it is *the hand that gives to the poor—that is most beautiful.*" As she said these words, the story says, the old woman's wrinkles fled; her staff was thrown away; and she stood before them as an angel from heaven, to teach them that in God's sight it is only goodness which makes people look beautiful. And this agrees with what the Bible teaches when it tells us that the most beautiful ornament that we can wear is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

There was an excellent minister in England, not

long ago, whose name was Dr. Marsh. He was very gentle, and loving, and kind, and good. And as he grew old his face became more and more beautiful. It seemed as if his religion was written in every line of his face. He lived near London. One day some friends went out to visit him in his beautiful parsonage. They took with them a heathen prince from India, who had come to London on some business with the Government. When this man saw good old Dr. Marsh, he was very much surprised by the appearance of his face. He thought it was the most beautiful face he had ever seen. It seemed to him almost like the face of an angel. When he was going back to London in the evening, that heathen prince said to his friends,—"That good minister has such a beautiful face, that I must learn about his religion, and worship his God."

The clouds praise God by giving us beautiful pictures. We can imitate the clouds by trying to be like Jesus. Then we shall be giving beautiful examples, just as the clouds give beautiful pictures, and so we shall be praising God in the same way.

*The second way in which the clouds praise God is by giving* PLEASANT SHADE.

If you are sitting in your parlour in the summer-time, and the sun comes blazing in through the window, you find its strong light very unpleasant. Then you get up and let down the blinds, or draw the curtains, so as to keep out the glare of the sun. When this is done, and you get just as much light as

you need in the parlour, you find it very pleasant and comfortable. Now, the clouds are like curtains which God has made to hang round the sun. And if you have a long walk to take in summer-time over a dusty road, you will suffer very much from the heat, if the beams of the sun are beating down on your head all the time. But if God draws the curtains about the sun, or rolls out the clouds over your head, how comfortably you will go on your way!

And this is what God did for the Israelites when they were travelling through the wilderness, and living there for forty years. David tells us—Psalm cv. 39—that "*He spread a cloud for a covering*" to them. The wilderness of Sinai, through which they travelled, is one of the hottest parts of the world. The sun shines with amazing power there. And as there is no grass to cover the earth, the barren sands become very hot, and the poor travellers have to do the best they can between two fires, one from above and another from beneath. It would have been impossible for the Israelites to have lived there as long as they did, if they had been left without some protection from the blazing sun.

But God is very thoughtful about his people; he tries in every way to make them comfortable. So "he spread a cloud for a covering." We are not told how he did this. Some people have thought that he made the cloud that hung over the tabernacle spread itself out over the camp of the Israelites, just as the branches of a tree are spread out from the trunk which supports the tree. The Israelites were

a nation at that time of four or five millions of people. When they pitched their tents, their encampment must have spread itself out for a number of miles. And if the cloud that covered them was connected with the cloud that guided them, as it hung over the tabernacle, what a beautiful sight it must have been! It would look just like a vast tree with its branches stretching out for miles on every side, to shelter the people from the scorching heat of the sun. The cloudy pillar that stood up over the tabernacle would be the trunk of the tree, and a part of the same cloud spread out for a covering would be like the branches of the tree. And under the refreshing shade of that cloudy tree the children of Israel must have found themselves very comfortable, even in that "great and terrible wilderness."

And now, when we look at the clouds as they go sailing through the sky, we see that one of the ways in which they praise God is by giving us *pleasant shade.*

And is there any way in which we can imitate the clouds in this respect? Yes. There are people about us, everywhere, in trial and trouble. Bearing trial is compared in the Bible to going through the fire, or enduring a great heat. And when we try to help and comfort those who are in trouble, we are doing for them just what the clouds do for us when God spreads them out as a covering to shelter us from the heat of the sun. Let us see how this may be done.

A little girl was going with her little brother to

the grocer's store one morning in winter. It was a cold, frosty morning, and the wind was very sharp. They were both poorly dressed, but the little girl had a sort of overcoat on, which she seemed to have outgrown.

As they walked briskly along she drew her little brother close up to her, saying,—

"Come under my coat, Johnny."

"It isn't big enough for both," he replied.

"I think I can stretch it a little," said his sister, drawing him closer to her side; and presently Johnny was skipping along as snug and as warm as could be.

This little girl was imitating the clouds by trying to be a covering to her poor brother. She found that by "stretching a little" she could wrap her brother round and make him comfortable. And oh! how many poor bodies, and souls too, might be blessed and made comfortable, if people would only "stretch a little" the means they have to do good with.

Some time ago, a lady in London was trying to get a girl to help her in doing housework. Her name was Mrs. Levy. One day, while walking in the street, she met a friend and asked her if she knew of any good girl that she could get. "Why don't you get one of Aunt Betsey's children?" said her friend.

"Aunt Betsey's children! Pray, who is Aunt Betsey?"

"She is an old Scotchwoman who lives in Bird's Alley. She adopts poor homeless, motherless chil-

dren, teaches them, takes care of them, gets them into good habits, and then puts them out in good places. I've had one of her children for a good while, and she's the best girl I ever had."

"That's very singular," said Mrs. Levy. "This woman must be a curiosity. I'd like to see her for her own sake. I'll go."

The next day Mrs. Levy went to Bird's Alley to find Aunt Betsey's home. As soon as she entered it she saw a large, tidy-looking room. The floor was as clean as hands could make it. She saw eight or nine girls, from three years old to fifteen; they were all busy. Some of the oldest were ironing clothes; others were sewing or knitting; and the youngest were twisting up slips of paper to make lamp-lighters.

While she was looking at them an elderly Scotch-woman came in. She wore a plain gingham dress, with a white apron, and a large, broad-frilled cap. She made a courtesy to the lady, and her face lighted up with a smile that made it look quite beautiful.

"I'm looking for a girl, my friend," said the lady; "and your home has been recommended to me as a good place to get one. Are these your own children?"

"Oh, no, ma'am, I'm not so rich as that. But let me see, there's Lizzie—she's been here long enough for a recommend. She's a strong, hearty girl, ma'am, an' never'll trouble you with any mean, low ways. Come here, Lizzie. Now, look in her face, ma'am. That's how I choose my children."

"Then are none of these yours?"

"Never had one in my life, ma'am," said Aunt Betsey with a smile.

"You are paid, then, for taking care of these children and providing them with a home?"

"Not a stiver, ma'am—who's to pay me? They are all poor orphans. Not one of 'em has a father or mother except me,—and I'm both to them, they think," she said, as she looked round affectionately at them. "Sometimes I feel half sorry that I took the *wee* things; but what could I do? They'd honest parents as was taken off with heavy sickness, and I couldn't see them left to suffer. True, it's but little I can do, for there's thousands of such poor creatures in the world; but I'll do all I can. I've put thirty-one into good homes."

"What!" cried Mrs. Levy, "do you mean to say that you have taken care of, and provided for, thirty-one children besides those that are here now?"

"Yes, ma'am; and the Lord's helped me to do it with my own hands for more than fifteen years back. I've never wanted; neither have they. And whether it's knack in me, or goodness in them, I don't know, but they'll all mind me, that they will, ma'am, with lifting up a finger."

What a beautiful sheltering cloud Aunt Betsey was! She was working for Jesus, all alone in that little alley, while nobody in the busy world knew what she was doing. But God knew it. Without husband or children of her own, without any church or committee to help her, without any means but

what she earned with her own hands, she had been a bright, sheltering cloud to thirty-one poor children, besides the eight or nine then in her home. She had clothed them and fed them and taught them the best she knew how, and then had found good homes for them, where they could be useful and happy.

The example of this good woman shows us what it is to be a Christian, and how those who love Jesus can make themselves useful. They can praise God, as the clouds do, by giving pleasant shade or shelter.

*The third way in which the clouds praise God, is by giving* REFRESHING SHOWERS.

The clouds are made up of vapour. Vapour is water which has changed its form and been turned into air. The sun, by its heat, has power to make this change. When it shines on the water in a pond, or lake, or river, or ocean, it warms the water. And as soon as the water is warmed up to a certain point, it turns into vapour. If you look at a pond or a tub of water when the sun is shining warmly upon it, you will see a sort of smoke rising from the surface of the water. This is the water turning into air or vapour. And when the tea-kettle is boiling on the fire, the same thing takes place. You see the steam rushing out from the spout, or from under the lid. This steam is the water, which has been turned into vapour by the heat of the fire. This vapour, which rises from all the lakes and rivers and seas, floats away into the sky, and makes the clouds. The clouds are only water which has changed its form

and been turned into vapour. They go sailing about the sky wherever God sends them. But when they get too full of vapour, like a sponge full of water when it is squeezed, they pour out the water in them, and it comes down as rain on the earth. The clouds are God's water-carriers. And it is very important to have such carriers. No tree, or plant, or flower could live and grow without water. And it is only

RAIN CLOUDS.

by the clouds that water can be carried to them. But God sends the clouds floating about in the sky all over the earth. They pour down showers of rain on the forests with their great trees, on the fields that are covered with grass and grain, and on the gardens that are filled with plants and flowers. The things that are growing there—in forest, or field, or garden—drink in the rain. It refreshes them, and

makes them strong and healthy. New leaves shoot out, the fruits ripen, and the flowers bloom in their beauty, because of the refreshing showers which the clouds pour down upon them.

And when we see how everything in the vegetable world depends for its life and growth on the rain which the clouds pour out, we may well say that they praise God by the refreshing showers which they give.

But in the Bible God's word is compared to rain. Moses said,—"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. xxxii. 2). Moses meant by this, that when he taught the people the truth which the Bible tells us about God, it would do good to their souls, just as the refreshing showers which the clouds pour out do good to the grass of the field. When we teach people about Jesus, therefore, we are praising God, as the clouds do, by pouring out refreshing showers on the earth. Let us see how this may be done.

One of the missionaries of the American Sunday-school Union had just organized a school in a destitute neighbourhood in the West. In his closing prayer he asked God to bless the school for "Jesus' sake." After the school was dismissed, a boy came up to him, and asked him what he meant at the end of his prayer by saying, for "Jesus' sake." Then he told him "the old, old story of Jesus and his love." He told him how he suffered and died, and how his great loving heart was broken with grief as he hung

upon the cross, and all because he loved us so much, and wanted to save us from our sins. The boy listened with wonder while the missionary was telling him all this. "The old story" was all new to him. When he heard what Jesus had done, his only reply was these two words: "Did he?" Then dropping his eyes, he walked away to his father's house. It was a house without prayer. A Bible was never seen in it. There he repeated, as well as he could, what the missionary had told him. His mother asked him more questions about it than he could answer.

"Just wait, mother, and I'll ask the missionary to come. He can tell you all about it."

Away he ran after the missionary, and asked him to come and tell his mother all that he had told him. The man went. His visit to that house brought a blessing to it; and now the Bible is read there every day, and family prayer is offered to God. That missionary's teaching was there like a cloud, bringing a refreshing shower to a garden where everything was parched and dying.

One day a king was riding along in disguise. He stopped at a wayside house to get some refreshment; and seeing a soldier there, he asked him to come and take something with him. As they were talking together, the king swore. The soldier was a pious man. "Sir," said he, "I am sorry to hear a gentleman like you swear."

The king took no notice of what he said, but soon swore again. Then the soldier rose, and said, "Sir, I'll pay for what I have taken, if you please, and go;

for I do so hate swearing, that if you were the king himself I should tell you of it."

"Would you, indeed?" said the king.

"I certainly should," replied the soldier.

The king would not let him pay for the refreshments, but shook hands with him, and bade him good-bye. The soldier had no idea who it was that he had been speaking to.

Some time after this, the king invited some of his lords and princes to dine with him. When the day came he sent for this soldier. While the dinner was going on, the soldier was ordered into the dining-hall, and told to stand near the king. Presently the king swore an oath.

The soldier made a respectful bow to him, and modestly said, "Please your majesty, should not my lord the king fear an oath?"

The king looked first at the lords, and then at the soldier, and said, "There, my lords, is an honest man. He can respectfully remind me of the sin of swearing, though none of you had courage enough to do it."

The words of that faithful soldier did good, like a refreshing shower; for they led the king to stop swearing himself, and so, by his example, to discourage it in others.

One day a little boy belonging to a Sunday school in Philadelphia met his teacher in the street, and told him he was going into the country to spend the summer.

"Well, Charlie," said the teacher, "and what are you going to do there?"

"Oh, I'll run about and play in the fields, and have nice fun."

"Very well for you," said the teacher; "but what else do you expect to do?"

"Why, I'll try and help the farmers, perhaps."

"Very good for the farmers," replied the teacher; "but what are you going to do for your heavenly Father?"

"What, me!" said he. "Why, what can such a little fellow as I am do for God?"

"You may do a great deal, if you only try. Here is a bundle of tracts. Suppose you take them, and give them away in the country."

"Oh, to be sure I can do that," said Charlie; and he took the tracts.

Well, he went to the country; and after he had been there some days, a boy living in the neighbourhood asked Charlie if he would help him to gather the cows together, and drive them home.

He said he would; thinking, at the same time, that this would be a good chance to give away one of his tracts.

On their way down the meadow, he said to the cow-boy, "Here's something for you," at the same time handing him a tract.

"What is it?" said he, looking it carefully over. "What is it?"

"It's something good to read," said Charlie.

"But I can't read," replied the boy; "yet I'll take it home. They can read it there."

It was a week or more after this before Charlie

met the boy again. The first time he saw him he said, "Well, Charlie, that little book you gave me made a great stir in our house, I tell you."

"Did it, though," said Charlie. "How was that?"

"Why," he replied, "they read the tract, and then they read the Bible; and when Sunday came they all went off to church. That tract's done great things, I tell you."

Charlie told his teacher about it when he went home; and he found out that not less than twenty-four persons were led to become Christians, and brought into the Church, through that one tract.

The clouds praise God in three ways—by giving *beautiful pictures, pleasant shade,* and *refreshing showers.*

Let us try to imitate their example, and then, like Jesus, we shall "go about doing good."

## IX.

# How the Trees Praise God.

"All the trees of the field shall clap their hands."—Isa. lv. 12.

"WELL, I never knew that trees had any hands," some of you may be ready to say, when you hear this text. You are right. Properly speaking, they have not. But this is said not as a simple, plain statement, but by what is called a figure of speech. When men are writing or speaking, they sometimes do just as children do in their play. They *suppose* things to be very different from what they are. The prophet Isaiah is supposing that the trees were just like boys and girls, or men and women. He is supposing that they were alive as we are; that they had hands and feet as we have; and that they could think and feel as we do. When we feel very happy, we laugh, and sing, and clap our hands. If we see a company of children jumping about and clapping their hands, we should know at once that something had made them

feel very glad. And if we should find out that the reason why they were so glad was that some kind friend had made them a present of some nice toys, and cakes, and candy, then we should understand what the children meant by clapping their hands. It would mean that they wanted to thank their friend, and praise him for his kindness to them; and this was the way in which they were trying to do it. And this is what the prophet Isaiah means in the verse in which our text is found, when he speaks of the mountains and the hills breaking forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clapping their hands. He means that they would thank and praise God for all he had done for them, just as we do when we sing and clap our hands. When he says, "All the trees of the field shall clap their hands," he means that they shall all praise God. And when we walk through the woods in the summer-time,—or sit down on a nice mossy bank under some shady tree, and see the leaves all shaking, or hear the rustling they make as the wind sweeps through them,—we may very well think that the tree is clapping its hands to show its thankfulness to God, and to praise him for all his goodness to it. And in Psalm cxlviii. 8 David speaks of "the cedars, and all fruitful trees," as praising God.

Everything God has made, which shows his wisdom and goodness, praises him in that way. And so we have only to speak of some of the ways in which the trees show the wisdom and goodness of God, and then it is easy to see how they praise him. Our subject now is, *How the trees praise God.*

I wish to speak of *three* ways in which they do this.

*In the first place, the trees praise God by the* PLEASURE THEY AFFORD US.

There are several things about trees that give us pleasure.

One of these is their *shape*. How beautiful this is! There is the great trunk, rising out of the ground, and gradually tapering, or getting smaller, as it rises higher. Then it throws out its great branches, like the arms of a giant. Over these the leaves are spread out, like a beautiful rich dress. Different kinds of trees have shapes that differ very much from each other, and yet they all are beautiful.

The oak generally has one great trunk running to the top, with branches growing out irregularly on each side, but the outline making a very beautiful shape. The horse-chestnut has one great trunk like the oak; but when this goes up to some distance, it divides itself into a number of smaller trunks, and out of these grow the branches. If you take the picture of an oak and a horse-chestnut tree, and draw a line round the outside of their branches, you see at once how very different from each other is the shape or outline of these two trees. The oak tapers up towards the top a great deal more than the chestnut does.

Then, look at the cypress tree. This runs up tall and slender, like our poplars. It is a gloomy-looking tree, of a dark green colour. For this reason, in

England and some other countries it is generally found in graveyards. The wood of this tree is very

A CLUMP OF OAK TREES.

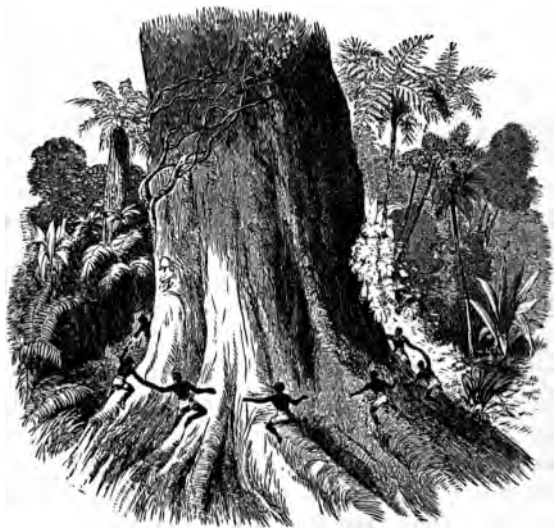
hard, and lasts a long while. On this account, the Egyptians used to make the coffins for their mummies out of it. And the wood called "gopher wood," in

the Bible, of which Noah built the ark, is supposed to have been cypress.

And how different from the shape of the cypress is that of the Scotch fir! This is one of the trees mentioned in the Bible. David says, "the fir trees are a dwelling for the stork." And when a state of prosperity is described, Israel is compared to "a green fir tree" (Hosea xiv. 8). When planted in a grove, this tree will grow up a tall, straight trunk, with hardly any branches upon it; but at the top it will shoot out numerous branches. The outline shape of this tree will be almost like that of an umbrella. Its shape is altogether different from that of the cypress. And yet each is beautiful. The trees give us pleasure by their *shape*.

Their *colour* is another thing about trees that is very pleasing. When they first put out their fresh green leaves in the spring, how delightful it is to look at them. And all through the summer, though the colour grows darker, how pleasant it is to look upon that robe of green, which the trees of the field and of the forest are wearing. How desolate and dreary our hills and mountains would look, if the tall trees that grow upon them, with their beautiful leaves of green, were all swept away. And then when autumn comes, and the early frosts just touch the trees, and the one green colour changes into red, and brown, and scarlet, and purple, and gold, and we see the woods and forests glowing and glittering with all the colours of the rainbow, how glorious it is, and what pleasure the trees give us then!

Another thing about the trees which gives us pleasure is their *size*. We like to look at *big* things, and especially at big trees. And the size to which some trees grow is really wonderful. At a place called Alonville, in Normandy, there is an oak which is more than thirty-five feet round the trunk. It is



MEASURING THE TRUNK OF A TREE.

very old. The inside of the trunk is decayed. It has been hollowed out, and a chapel has been made in the trunk. It is nicely paved, and there is a flight of steps in front, leading up to it.

In South America the locust tree grows to a very great size. A gentleman who had been there saw one

A GIANT TREE OF CALIFORNIA.

which was so large that it took fifteen Indians, stretching out their arms just so that their fingers would touch, to measure round the trunk of it.

But the greatest trees in the world are in California. There is a small forest of these big trees on the side of a mountain. Some of them, when they have fallen down and been hollowed out, are large enough for two or three men on horseback to ride abreast through the trunk. One of these trees is four hundred and fifty feet high. This is more than twice as high as *any* church steeple in this city. If this tree were

hollowed out, the trunk would make a room large enough to hold a school of a hundred boys and a hundred girls, with a dozen teachers.

Some of these trees have fanciful names given to them. One group is called the "Three Sisters." A single tree, standing by itself, is called the "Old Bachelor." Another is called the "Old Maid." Two others, standing together, are called the "Mother and her Son." The mother stands three hundred and twenty-five feet high; and her son is rather tall for his age, as he reaches to three hundred feet. There is one tree called the "Mother of the Forest." It rises straight up to the height of a hundred and forty feet before a single branch appears. Then it goes up and up and up till it reaches to three hundred and sixty-three feet; that is only forty-one feet less than the top of St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

Very few of us may ever see these great trees. But even the large oaks, or pines, or chestnuts, that are found in our woods and forests everywhere, are very interesting to look at. When we think of their great spreading roots underground, of their huge trunks, of their long, spreading branches, and of the multitude of leaves that cover them, we feel how much pleasure the trees give us by their *size*.

And then the *age* of some trees is a thing about them that gives us pleasure. We like to look at *old* things. If we have an aged friend who is getting on towards ninety or a hundred years old, how we like to look at his bending form and his silvery locks as he walks slowly by! But some trees live to a greater

age than even Methuselah reached, who was near a thousand years old when he died.

You know it is easy to tell the age of a tree, for the wood forms in rings that grow outside of each other. One of these rings is formed every year, so that when you cut into the wood and count the rings you can tell just how old the tree is.

The oldest oak-tree in England is called the "Parliament Oak," because King Edward the First is said to have held a Parliament under its branches. It is just six hundred years since Edward the First began to reign. This "Parliament Oak" is said to be fifteen hundred years old. It belongs to the Duke of Portland.

The big tree in California of which we have already spoken is supposed to be *three thousand* years old. Then it must have begun to grow some time before Samuel was born. Only think of a tree living on through all those years!

Among the cedars of Lebanon is one large tree which is reckoned to be *four thousand* years old. This must have begun to grow very soon after Noah came out of the ark. The oldest tree in the world is said to be on the Cape De Verd Islands. It belongs to what is called the *baobab*, or *monkey-bread tree*. This tree is calculated by a French traveller, Adanson, to be over *five thousand* years old. If this is true, it must have begun to grow *while Adam was still living!*

And when we think of the beautiful *shapes* of different trees, of their *colour*, their *size*, and their *age*,

we see some of the things about trees which are most interesting; and we may well say that the first way

CEDARS OF LEBANON.

in which the trees praise God is by the pleasure they afford us.

*In the second place, the trees praise God by* THE GOOD THEY DO US.

The trees are doing us good all the time in many ways. You know if you put some fish in an aquarium, and don't have some plants growing in it, the fish will

die. The plants have the power of keeping the water pure, so that the fish can live in it. But our world is like a great aquarium. The air about us is like the water in the aquarium, and we are moving about in it just as the fish do in the aquarium. But if it were not for the trees and plants which God has made, we could not live in this world. The air would get so impure, so full of poisonous gas, that it would kill us. The trees prevent this. They keep the air about us pure, and fit for breathing; and this is one way in which the trees are doing us good all the time.

And then the trees do us good by *the fruits they yield.* Suppose the trees should stop bearing fruit. Then we should never see another apple, or pear, or peach, or orange, or lemon. How many nice articles of food and how many valuable medicines we should lose, if it were not for the trees!

But besides yielding fruit, there are other ways in which some trees do good. A celebrated traveller, whose name was Humboldt, gives an account of a tree which he saw in South America, and which he calls the "*cow tree.*" These trees are so called because they take the place of cows in supplying the people with milk. How strange it seems to think of *wooden* cows, that yet can give real, good, sweet milk! Humboldt describes one of these trees, which he saw growing out of a rock. He says:—"It has large woody roots. Its leaves are dry and leathery. For several months in the year no rain falls to moisten its leaves. Its branches look dry and dead; yet as

soon as the trunk is pierced a sweet and nourishing milk flows out. The best time for milking this cow tree is at sunrise. Then the natives may be seen going out, with their bowls and calabashes, to milk

THE COW TREE.

these wooden cows. They make slits in the branches of the trees, and soon have their bowls filled with nice fresh milk. Some drink it there on the spot, and others carry it home to their children." Mr. Humboldt says he drank some of this strange milk. The smell was pleasant, the taste was sweet, and it agreed with him. And when we think of the many benefits we receive from the trees, we may very well say that the trees praise God by the good they do us.

*The third way in which the trees praise God, is by* THE LESSONS THEY TEACH US.

THE TRAVELLER'S TREE.

There are many lessons we may learn from the trees, but I will only speak of three.

The trees teach us *a lesson of usefulness.*

Trees make themselves useful as long as they live, in many ways. There is a remarkable tree in the Island of Madagascar, called "the traveller's tree." Its branches do not grow out of the trunk on all sides like other trees, but they all spring out in one line like the spokes of a wheel, or like the stems of a fan. At the end of each branch grows a broad double leaf several feet in length, which spreads out very gracefully. Under these branches,

after sunset, the dew is found. It collects into drops. It forms little streams, which run down the branches. At the end of each branch is a hollow place where the water collects. These branches overlap each other; and as the travellers go along, without cutting the tree, but just by putting a thin piece of stick between the branches, the water will flow out. They have only to hold a cup under the branch, and soon it is filled with good, clear, sweet, wholesome water.

All trees are useful in some way or other; but then there are some trees every part of which is useful. The cocoa-nut tree is one of the

THE COCOA-NUT TREE.

most useful trees in the world. Its nuts afford oil, a kind of milk, and fruit. From the shell of the nut are made spoons, and cups, and bowls, and bottles. The bark of the tree is made into twine, and cordage, and cloth, and mats. The young buds are eaten as a vegetable. From the sap sugar is made. The leaves are used for sails for boats, for sacks, for baskets, and thatch for their cottages; and when burned, their ashes yield potash, which is useful for many things. The wood of the tree is used for water-troughs, canoes, and other purposes.

But the bamboo tree, which grows in China, is more useful even than the cocoa-nut tree. It grows to the height of about eighty feet, and bears neither blossom nor fruit. The leaves are small and narrow, but many of the stems are thicker than a man's arm. In building, its largest stems are used for pillars, rafters, and planks; its leaves for thatching the roof, and the smaller fibres for matting for the floor. In the homes of the Chinese it is made into bedsteads, tables, chairs, and other articles of furniture; also into umbrellas, hats, musical instruments, baskets, cups, brooms, soles of shoes, pipes, bows and arrows, sedan chairs, and wicks of candles. Its fine fibres are made into twine; its shavings serve for stuffing pillows; its leaves are used as a cloak in wet weather, called "a garment of leaves;" and the chop-sticks, which the Chinaman uses instead of a knife and fork, are made out of bamboo stems. The tender shoots of this tree are boiled and used as a vegetable; the pulp is formed into paper, and the pith into pickles and sweetmeats.

It is used on the water as well as on land. Boats, floats, sails, cable, rigging, fishing-rods, and fishing-baskets are made of it. It is as useful to the farmer as it is to the sailor. He depends on it for carts,

AN AVENUE OF BAMBOOS.

wheelbarrows, ploughs, water-pipes, wheels, and fences, and many other things. And yet the half is not told about this wonderful tree. It is used everywhere, for everything,—in the houses, in the fields,

on water and on land, in peace and in war. What a lesson of usefulness the trees teach us!

And so it is true that every tree we see is a preacher to us. It bids us follow its example, and make ourselves useful.

A good man in England once adopted the rule of trying to make one person happy every day. This is a very good rule. Every one of us might adopt it and practise it. Then we should make three hundred and sixty-five persons happy every year. In ten years there would be three thousand six hundred and fifty persons made happy by each one of us. And if this one were multiplied by hundreds and thousands, what streams of happiness would be flowing everywhere! How much good could be done in this way, with very little cost or labour!

One day a good Christian man was driving a nail in his study to hang something on. When he had done pounding it in, he said to himself,—"I want to make use of that nail, and the only way in which it can make itself useful is by just staying still where I have fixed it, and holding on to what I put on it. If that nail could think and speak, and should say to itself, 'I don't like to be staying here all the time; I think I could be more useful in some other place;' and then, if it should leave the place where I had driven it in, and should go flying all over the house, making a busy-body of itself, coming where it was not wanted, and doing what it was not wanted to do, I should be very much put out with that nail." And *then* the good man went on to say to himself,—"Well,

and are not men and women, and boys and girls, like living nails? And am I not one of those nails myself? Does not the Bible speak of Jesus as 'a nail fastened in a sure place'? And are we not all like nails that God has fastened just where he wants us to be? And is there any better way for us to make ourselves useful than just to stay quietly where God puts us, and try to hold whatever he hangs upon us?"

That was a very good lesson to get out of a nail. And it is just the lesson which the catechism teaches us when it bids us try to "*do our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us.*"

Another lesson which the trees teach us is—*about the use of trouble.*

There is a young tree on the side of a mountain. It is very much exposed to the rough winds that sweep by it. Look at it, and see how its branches are tossed about by the storm, and how the tree rocks and bends under the strong winds that are blowing there! As we stand and watch it, we are ready to think that it must be very much injured by all this shaking; but it is not so. Instead of harming the tree, it does it good. While the wind is rushing through its branches, and tossing them about so wildly, the roots of the tree are striking deeper into the ground, and getting more nourishment for the tree. They are twisting themselves round the rocks, deep down in the soil, and so are helping to make the tree stronger, and healthier, and handsomer than it would be if the storm had not shaken it.

And it is just so with the troubles that God per-

mits to come upon his people in this life. These troubles do people good, by helping to make them better Christians; just as the stormy winds do good to the tree by making it grow stronger. It is not a *pleasant* thing to bear trouble, but if we bear it rightly God will make it profitable. Sometimes God sends trouble upon us in order *to save our lives.*

Some years ago a young man, who lived in the interior of Massachusetts, was going out to the East Indies. His passage was engaged on board of a vessel that was to sail from Boston on a particular day. It was before the days of railways. He left his home among the Berkshire hills two weeks before the vessel sailed, so as to have plenty of time to get ready for the voyage. In running down one of the hills, on the way to Boston, the coach was upset and broken, and the young man had his leg broken. He was obliged to remain for a number of weeks in the village near where the accident happened, till his broken limb got well. Of course the ship sailed without him, and he lost his passage. He thought this was very hard, and he complained very bitterly about his disappointment. But the ship on which he was to have sailed was never heard of again. It was lost at sea, and all on board perished. When the young man learned this he thanked God for his broken leg, and was ready to say with David, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." God sent the broken leg to save that young man's life.

Sometimes God sends trouble *to save our souls.*

There was a young man once who was the son of

good Christian parents, but who grew up without becoming a Christian himself. His parents taught him and prayed for him, and then died and went to heaven.

His business prospered. He became rich; but he was not a Christian. He married, and had one darling boy, whom he loved above everything else in the world; but yet he did not become a Christian. Then, at last, God sent trouble upon him. He lost his property; yet he did not become a Christian. He was taken sick, and the sickness ended in the loss of his eyesight; still he did not become a Christian. Finally, his little boy was taken sick and died. And then in the sorrow that overwhelmed him, as he held the cold form of his dead child in his arms, and stroked the pale cheeks which he could no longer see, his hard heart was broken. He repented of his sins, and became a Christian. If he had only become a Christian sooner, he might have been saved all that trouble. The trouble was sent to save his soul. It did this; and great as his sorrow was for what he had lost, he might well say, as David did, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

*Sometimes God sends trouble on us to fit us for greater happiness in heaven.*

Some good Christians have a great deal of trouble in this world. The reason of it is that God is preparing them for very great happiness in heaven. Last summer, while in the city of Amsterdam, in Holland, I was very much interested in a visit we made to a place there famous for polishing diamonds.

We saw the men as they were engaged in this work. When a diamond is first found it has a rough, dark outside, and looks just like a common pebble. The outside must be ground off and the diamond be polished before it is fit for use. It takes a long time to do this, and it is very hard work. The diamond has to be fixed very firmly in the end of a piece of hard wood or metal. Then it is held close to the surface of a large metal wheel, which is kept going round. Fine diamond dust is put on this wheel, because nothing else is hard enough to polish the diamond. And this work is kept on for days, and weeks, and months, and sometimes for several years, before it is finished. And if a diamond is intended to be used in the crown of a king, then longer time and greater pains are spent upon it, so as to make it look as brilliant and beautiful as can be.

Now Jesus calls his people *his jewels.* He intends them to shine like jewels in the crown he will wear in heaven. To fit them for this, they must be polished, like the diamond. And God makes use of the troubles he sends on his people in this world to polish his jewels. And when we get to heaven, and see how beautiful they look, we shall see that it was indeed good for them that they were troubled. It has fitted them for greater happiness there.

There is one other lesson the trees teach us; and that is—*the benefit of trying.*

Sometimes we see trees growing in places where we should think it was impossible for them to live. They *seem to* be growing right out of a rock. Perhaps the

seed from which they sprang has been dropped into a crack of that rock. There it begins to grow. But there is rock all round it, and rock all under it. How can it live there? Might it not as well give up and die? No; trees belong to the "try company;" and they are good, active, working members of that company. They seem to have great faith in the benefit of trying. But what can a tree do that is planted directly on a rock? It must have water and nourishment. The rock, hard and dry as it is, cannot give these. Then what can the tree do? It *tries* to get what it needs somewhere else. It sends out long branching roots. These go creeping round the rock, or over the rock, or under the rock, till they reach the soil. Then they strike down into it. They get supplies of nourishment for the tree. They send these up to the tree; and so the tree is kept alive, and grows and flourishes, and gives a fine lesson about the benefit of trying. And if we learn this lesson well, and practise it faithfully, we shall be able to do wonderful things.

Some time ago an effort was made to get the chimney-sweeps together in the city of London, to have them taught to read. Among others came a little fellow, who was asked if he knew his letters.

"Oh yes," was the reply.

"Do you spell?"

"Oh yes," was his answer again.

"Do you read?"

"Oh yes."

"And what book did you learn from?"

"I never had a book in my life, sir."

"And who was your schoolmaster?"

"Oh, I never went to school."

Here was a singular case—a boy who could read and spell without a book, and without ever going to school! And how did it happen? Another little sweep, a little older than himself, had taught him to read by showing him the letters on the signs over the shop-windows, as they went along through the streets. His teacher, then, was a little sweep like himself, and his book the sign-boards on the houses. Here we see the benefit of trying.

A good many years ago, an English nobleman—the Duke of Argyll—was walking in his garden one day, when he saw a Latin book lying on the grass. He thought that some one had brought it out from his library, and left it there; so he called the gardener's son—a lad about seventeen or eighteen years old, whose name was Edward Stone—and told him to carry it to the house.

"Please, sir," said the boy, "the book is mine."

"Can you read Latin, Edward?" asked the duke.

"Yes, sir." On talking with him, he was surprised to find out how many things he knew.

"But tell me, my lad," said the duke, "how you came to know all these things."

"A servant taught me to read ten years ago, sir; and then *trying* did all the rest. When the masons were at work on your house, I saw the builder one day using a rule and a compass, and making calculations. I asked the meaning of it. I was told there

was a science called arithmetic. I thought I'd try to learn it. I bought a book on arithmetic, and learned it. Then I heard about geometry. I thought I'd try and learn that. Then I found there were books about these things in Latin. I bought a grammar and a dictionary, and learned Latin. I found there were more books of the same kind in French; so I bought a grammar and a dictionary, and learned French. This, my lord, is what I have done, and the way in which I have done. It seems to me, when we know the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, we can learn anything *by trying.*'

That was a noble fellow! Let every boy and girl think of Edward Stone's saying: "When we know the alphabet, *we can learn anything by trying.*"

I will close with a short story about trying, in something that will suit us all—something of the very greatest importance; and something, too, which we must all do, or else be lost.

"What is the use of being in the world unless you are somebody?" said a boy one day to his friend George.

"True enough; and I *mean* to be," said George. "I began this very day. I mean to be 'somebody.'"

George's friend looked him in the face with great surprise, and said: "Began to-day! how? I don't understand you. *What* do you mean?"

"Why," said George, "I mean to be a Christian boy, and so grow up to be a Christian man. I believe *that* is the greatest 'somebody' for us to be; and I mean to try with all my heart. I've begun to try to-day, and I'm going to keep on trying."

That was right; that was noble. That is just the way in which I want you all to try. This is something within the reach of us all. We can't all become rich, or learned, or great; but *we may all become Christians.* This is the best of all things to try for.

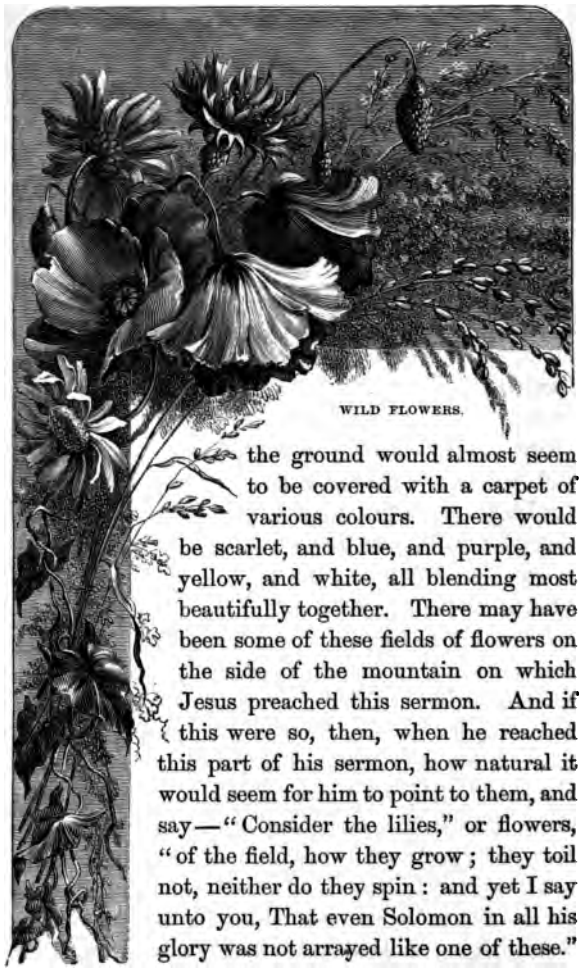
We have spoken of three ways in which the trees praise God. The first is, *by the pleasure they give us;* the second is, *by the good they do for us;* the third is, *by the lessons they teach us.* They teach us *a lesson of usefulness, a lesson about the use of trouble,* and *a lesson about the benefit of trying.* Let us think of these lessons, and try to practise them whenever we look at the trees; and then, like them, we too shall learn to praise God.

X.

# How the Flowers Praise God.

"Consider the lilies of the field."—MATT. vi. 28.

WHEN *we* speak of lilies, we know very well what kind of a flower it is that we mean. But when Jesus spoke of lilies here, it is not so certain what he meant. Some people think he did not mean any one particular kind of flower, but flowers of any kind. Perhaps he did. We may suppose that this was so. And then we can think of Jesus as saying to us, "Consider the flowers of the field." We think and speak of the flowers of the *garden*. But in Palestine, where Jesus lived, it was very natural to speak of "the flowers of the *field*." The wild flowers that grow in the field there, without any particular care or cultivation, are very many and very beautiful. When we were there last year, in the month of April, nothing surprised us more than to see the multitude of flowers that were growing wild out in the open fields. Sometimes



WILD FLOWERS.

the ground would almost seem to be covered with a carpet of various colours. There would be scarlet, and blue, and purple, and yellow, and white, all blending most beautifully together. There may have been some of these fields of flowers on the side of the mountain on which Jesus preached this sermon. And if this were so, then, when he reached this part of his sermon, how natural it would seem for him to point to them, and say—"Consider the lilies," or flowers, "of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Then here we have Jesus sending us to study the flowers, in order to learn how they praise God. Flowers are among the most beautiful things that God has made. Sometimes the flowers have been called "the *smiles* of God." This is a very sweet view to take of them. And when we see the lily opening itself in snowy whiteness before us, or the modest violet in its beautiful blue, or the rose in its blushing red, how pleasant it is to think to ourselves, "Here God is smiling on us in his goodness!"

And the flowers show God's goodness to us more than almost anything else he has made; because it was not necessary for him to have made them. We have spoken of the way in which the air, and the light, and the clouds, and the trees praise God. *They* all show God's goodness. But the flowers show that goodness much more than they do. It was necessary for God to make the air, and the light, and the clouds, and the trees. We couldn't live without them; but we *could* live without the flowers.

"God might have made the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak-tree and the cedar-tree,
Without a flower at all.

"He might have made things grow enough
For every want of ours—
For luxury, medicine, and toil;
And yet have made no flowers.

"Our outward life requires them not;
Then wherefore had they birth?
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the earth;

"To comfort man—to whisper hope,
Whene'er his faith is dim;
For He who careth for the flowers
Will care much *more* for him."

And it is because the flowers have so much to tell us about the goodness of God that Jesus said, "Consider the lilies of the field."

Our subject to-day is—*How the flowers praise God.* We might speak of many ways in which they do this; but we shall confine ourselves to two. *The flowers praise God, in the first place,* BY WHAT THEY ARE; *and, in the second place,* BY WHAT THEY TEACH.

The flowers praise God BY WHAT THEY ARE.

And now we have to speak of some of the things about the flowers by which they show the wisdom and goodness of God, and so praise him. Jesus says, "Consider the lilies,"—or consider the flowers. And if we want to understand what the flowers are, there are *five* things about them for us to consider, in trying to learn how they praise God. We can hang each of these five things on a single word. So we can count them on the fingers of our hand, and easily recollect them.

We may begin by saying that the flowers praise God by their *numbers.* It is wonderful how many flowers God has made. Those who have studied most about the flowers, reckon that there are about eighty thousand different kinds already known. And no doubt there are a great many more that have not been found out yet. And then how many there are

of each peculiar kind! When we go into a large hot-house, or to an exhibition of flowers, we look with surprise and wonder to see how many there are.

An English gentleman who was travelling in Persia lately, says that on one occasion, when he was visiting a Persian gentleman, he was invited out to the garden in the morning to take his breakfast. The flowers were so numerous in that garden, that before each person a great pile of rose-leaves was heaped up for a table. A carpet was laid over each pile, and so they ate their breakfast from tables of rose-leaves.

People sometimes make a very poor use of the many flowers which God in his goodness has caused to grow for our pleasure.

There was a beautiful but wicked queen once, whose name was Cleopatra. She wanted to give a very splendid feast to a great Roman general named Antony. She got roses enough to cover the floor of the large dining-hall, three feet thick all over. Then mats were spread over the flowers; and the table was set out, and the guests sat down to eat on a floor of roses a yard thick.

This was making a very bad use of God's beautiful flowers.

But there is a story told of a foolish and wicked Roman emperor who did worse than this. He invited some company to his palace. He had an arrangement made by which violets and roses should be showered down upon his company all over the great hall in which they met together. This was kept up

until they found themselves floundering about in a sea of flowers; and some of them actually died from suffocation among the flowers.

And when we think of the multitude of flowers that spring out of the earth, we may well say that they praise God by their *numbers*.

But the flowers praise God by their *variety*, as well as by their numbers.

When we look at a green-house full of flowers, one of the first thoughts that comes into our minds is—How wonderfully different they are from each other! When men make watches or jewels, or such like things, they have only a few patterns of each. And those made after each pattern are all made exactly alike. But God has a great many patterns of the flowers that he makes, and even those belonging to a particular class or pattern are very different from each other. Take the rose, for instance, as one of the flowers we are best acquainted with. There are six hundred different varieties of this one flower. And yet if you go into a garden and pluck two roses from the same bush, you will find it impossible to get two buds or two flowers that are entirely alike in all respects. There is a wonderful variety among flowers. Some are very simple. Their flowers are formed of single leaves. We see examples of this kind in the cowslip and the buttercup. But others are crowded with leaves—like the rose, the cactus, and the marigold.

Some plants bear only one flower on a stem —like the snowdrop, the crocus, and the violet; while others are covered all over with flowers—like

the sweetwilliam, the snowball, the clover, and the sunflower. This, you know, opens as large as a saucer; and it is made up of hundreds of little flowers, each of which is perfect in itself, and has a seed at the end of it. Some flowers are very small—like the forget-me-not, the heliotrope, and the pretty little flower called the Quaker-girl, which is found in great numbers in our fields and woods. But others grow to a great size—like the dahlia, the peony, and the magnolia grandiflora, whose petals are over ten inches in length. The Victoria Regia is a flowering plant from South America, that grows in the water. It bears a flower that is sometimes a foot in diameter, or three feet in circumference. The leaves of this plant grow to be six feet in diameter, or eighteen feet in circumference. They are turned up at the edges so as to make a sort of rim. One of these leaves would do for a boat, and would support a child on the water. I knew of a lady, whose weight was a hundred pounds, who stood on one of these leaves.

Some flowers only open once, bloom for a single day, and then close up and die—like the spiderwort and the day-lily; but others continue in bloom for a long time—like the chrysanthemum, the geranium, and the China aster.

Some open when the sun rises in the morning—like the passion-flower; and when the sun goes down in the evening, they fold up their leaves and go to sleep. Others—like the night-blooming cereus—only open their flowers in the dark. They come shining out like the stars to beautify and cheer the night. Flowers

open at so many different hours, that a celebrated botanist once made what he called a floral clock, by getting some one flower to represent each hour of the day. He found out the time at which each flower opened, and then took that flower to stand for that hour.

THE ALOE.

There is a great variety among flowers as to the *times* or *periods* when they bear or bloom.

Thus, among roses there are some that bloom only once a year. These are called annual roses. Some bloom monthly, and some daily, and they are named accordingly. Some—like the monotrope—spring up perfect in a single night; while others—like the aloe—bloom only once in a great while. This is sometimes called "the century plant," because some have supposed that it only blooms once in a hundred years. This is not perhaps strictly true, but certainly it is only once in a very long time that it bears flowers.

This plant has one thick stem or trunk four or five feet high. Its leaves grow directly out of this trunk. They are long, thick, and sharp-pointed. When not flowering, it hardly seems to grow at all; but when the time for flowering comes, it sends out a long straight stem from the top of the trunk. This shoots up very rapidly, almost like Jack the giant-killer's famous bean, till it reaches the height of sixteen or twenty feet. Then the flowers come out in great numbers all over the upper part of this stem. They are of a greenish-yellow colour, and look very beautiful. And thus we see how the flowers praise God by their *variety*.

The flowers praise God, again, by their *beauty*, as well as by their numbers and variety.

The *colours* of flowers are very beautiful. The blushing red of the rose, the snowy whiteness of the lily or japonica, the delicate blue of the violet, the bright cheerful yellow of the crocus, the deep scarlet of the fuschia and the geranium, and the many colours of the hyacinth—how beautiful they are to look at!

And then the *forms* or *shapes* of different flowers are quite as beautiful as their colours. Look at the rosebud when it is preparing to burst into flower, how beautiful it is! How beautiful is the form of the common lilac! When you look at it closely, you hardly know which to admire most,—the tiny little flowers that make up the whole bunch, or the shape of the bunch itself, as it looks just like a rounded pyramid. Then there is the Egyptian lily—the flower of the Nile—which in its shape is one of the

most beautiful of all flowers. And when you think of the Canterbury bells, and the tulips, and the trumpet-flowers, you see what a wonderful amount of beauty there is in the forms or shapes of the different flowers.

But the flowers praise God by their *fragrance*, or the sweet smell which they give out. Some flowers have no smell, but most of them have a scent which is very fragrant. The rose, and the violet, and the mignonette give out a very delightful fragrance. God might have made them all without any smell; but he knew it would give us pleasure to have them filling the air about them with sweet fragrance, and so he gives them power to do this. We cannot tell how it is that the flowers spread these pleasant perfumes about them. Many wise and learned men have studied a long time about this. They have tried to find out how it is that the flowers make the air about them so pleasant, but they cannot tell anything about the way in which it is done. And when some flower is found which has no fragrance, all the wisest men in the world are not able to make it fragrant. There is the dahlia, for example. You know what a pretty flower it is. In colour and form it is beautiful as the rose, but then it has no fragrance. It would be twice as valuable as it is if it only had the same sweet perfume that the rose has. But nobody can give it this power. The fragrance of the flowers is God's gift to them. And every time we smell this sweet, pleasant fragrance, we should be reminded of God's great goodness. This is one of the ways in which the *flowers* praise God.

And then they praise God, too, by the *places* in which they grow. The flowers grow everywhere. Not only in the garden, but in the field, on the wall, by the road-side, in the sandy desert, and wherever we go we find flowers. In travelling over the Alps in Switzerland, one of the pleasant things is to find flowers everywhere. At the lower part of the mountains you find them in great abundance; and when you get up to the top of the mountains you find them there too. Wherever there is a handful of earth you will find a patch of flowers. If there be a crack in the rock just big enough to put the point of a knife in, there the wind will carry the seed of some flower as fine as dust. It will lodge in that crack, and out will spring a flower. Far up above where trees or even grass is found, you will find the beautiful flowers. Some are as white as the snow around them, and others as blue as the sky above them. Everything around is dreary, and barren, and desolate; but still the flowers are there. They spring up and smile in their beauty, as if to show us that God is there. And even at the bottom of the sea there are flowers as beautiful in their forms and colours as any that grow in our gardens or greenhouses. And so, when we think of the places in which they grow, we see one of the ways in which the flowers praise God. And when we remember the *number* of the flowers, their *variety*, their *beauty*, their *fragrance*, and the *places* in which they grow, we see how the flowers praise God *by what they are*. This is one way in which they do it.

*The second way in which they do it is* BY WHAT THEY TEACH.

The flowers teach us many lessons. We may speak of three of these. One of these is—*a lesson of contentment.*

The flowers seem to have a great deal to say to us on this subject. Some flowers grow in greenhouses, where great care is taken of them, and they are protected from the cold. Everything is done for them that can be to make them grow and flourish. Some grow in gardens, some in fields, and some in strange out-of-the-way places, where no one ever sees them, and where they are never gathered, but are left to grow as well as they can, and then to fade and die. But no matter where they are found, they are satisfied with the place that God puts them in, and they try to make the best of it. Sometimes a flower finds itself growing in an old broken teapot, or in a wooden box in the garret window of some poor old woman who lives in the crowded court of a great city; yet it never frets or worries about its position. If it does not get fresh air and sunshine, it can't grow much. But if it can only get plenty of these, it will try to grow, and look green and beautiful, and bear the very nicest flower that any plant of its kind can bear. And when we see the flowers growing so beautifully in strange, wild, desolate, and disagreeable places, they seem to be preaching to us about contentment. They tell us that God has put us where we are; and what he wants us to do is, not to fret and worry about our situation, but to be satisfied with it, and try to do the best we can in it.

You know what a sweet, lovely flower the moss-rose is. The rose itself is one of the most lovely of our flowers; but the soft green moss that grows all round the stems and buds of this flower adds very much to its beauty. The flowers praise God by the lessons they teach us. One of these is the lesson of contentment.

THE MOSS-ROSE.

Another lesson the flowers teach us is—*a lesson of trust;* and in this way they praise God.

It is not our garden flowers, or those that grow in hot-houses, that teach us this lesson so much, because they are carefully watched and attended to; but it is the wild flowers that give us the best teaching on this subject. These flowers seem to be left to themselves. They have no human care-taker, and they cannot take care of themselves. As Jesus said, "They toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The dress of the flowers is richer, and finer, and more beautiful than that of the greatest king in the world. And it is God who takes care of these flowers. He sends the sun to shine on them,

and the rain and the dew to water them, and the wind to stir their leaves and make them grow. The flowers never trouble themselves about how they are to live. They never worry about the weather: whether there will be as much rain as they may want to-morrow, or next week, or next month; or whether a frost may come and nip them; or whether the sun may be too hot for them,—are things that never give them any anxiety. They leave all these things with God. They trust to him to take care of them; and he does so. And when we see them springing up by the roadside, or in dreary desolate places, and growing so brightly there; or when we see them about our homes, looking so fresh and beautiful, without any labour or effort of their own, we may well learn from them the lesson of trust in God.

Last summer, when I was in London, I heard a good story from my friend Mr. T. B. Smithies, the editor of the *British Workman*, which will come in very nicely here.

Mr. Smithies said that some years ago there was a time of great distress among the working people of one of the counties in England. The supply of cotton had failed. The mills had been obliged to stop work. The people, cut off from their wages, had nothing to eat, and many of them were starving. Mr. Smithies went with Captain Hawes to visit some of those people. They went into a house where an old man and woman were living, and asked them how they were getting on. "We have sold everything," said *the old* man, "that could be turned into money or

bread, and now there's nothing left." Mr. Smithies looked round the bare room, and saw nothing there that any broker would buy, except a beautiful flower in a nice flower-pot in the window.

"You have not sold quite *all* yet," said Mr. Smithies to the old man. "This beautiful flower would sell for several shillings."

The old man's eyes filled with tears, and with a good deal of feeling he said, "Oh, sir, we can't part with *that!*"

"Why not, my friend?" asked Mr. Smithies.

"Oh, sir, that flower has been such a comfort to us in all our trouble. When we have looked at it, morning after morning, and seen it growing so nicely, and opening its beautiful buds and flowers, it has seemed to be preaching to us all the time, and telling us to trust in God. And we have often said to ourselves, 'Surely our heavenly Father, who takes care of this flower, will in due time send us help.' And surely he has done so.

"Oh no, sir," continued the old man with animation, whilst the tears trickled down his cheek; "that plant has been *a helper* to us in our sorrow, and we would starve before we would sell it!"

Now we see how well that flower taught those poor people the lesson we are speaking of. And we see how well they learned that lesson. They were helped from that day onward, and felt that in trusting to God they were not disappointed.

In a little room at the top of a house in London, where every room was the dwelling-place of a family,

a Bible-reader met an old woman. She had only about five shillings a week to live upon, and that was hardly enough to keep her alive. The visiter was surprised to see a strawberry plant growing and flourishing in a broken teapot that stood on the window. As he came there from time to time, he saw how nicely it was growing, and was pleased to see with how much interest the old woman watched over and cared for it."

One day he said to her,—"Your little plant is growing finely. It has some nice blossoms on it now, and you will soon have some strawberries ripening there."

"Oh, it's not for the fruit that I take so much care of it," said the old woman.

"Then why do you take so much interest in it?" he asked.

"Well, sir, you see I'm very poor. I'm too poor to keep a living creature of any kind. But it's a great comfort to me to have this living plant. For I know it can only live by the power of God; and as I see it live and grow from day to day, it tells me that God is here, and it teaches me to trust in him." That little plant was a silent preacher to that poor old woman in her loneliness.

I have been delighted to see, even in the crowded courts of London, the love of plants evinced by the poor. Where there is no possibility of having any garden ground, the window ledge is often made to furnish a nice little flower-bed. One Sunday afternoon I attended an open-air service held by the

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER STRAWBERRY PLANT.

"Friends" in a court near the Bedford Institute, in Spitalfields, and was much gratified by hearing an interesting story of a flower which had been a *comfort* to a poor woman for several years.

And thus we see how the flowers praise God by the lessons they teach us. And one of the lessons that the flowers teach us is a lesson of trust.

And then the third lesson that the flowers teach us is—*how to do good.*

Every flower is a little missionary. God has sent the flowers into the world to make themselves useful. They do a wonderful deal of good; and if we only watch them carefully, they will teach us how to make ourselves useful.

When I was in Italy last year, I went up Mount Vesuvius. This, you know, is a famous volcanic mountain near Naples. At the top of the mountain is an opening, called a crater, in the shape of a huge funnel. This crater is nearly half a mile wide, and twelve or fifteen hundred feet deep. From that great opening the mountain sometimes pours out vast streams of melted rocks, called lava. These run down the sides of the mountain like burning rivers. When they get cold, they remain on the side of the mountain as great beds of solid rock. In going up the mountain, you have to ride right over those beds of lava rock. I never saw anything that looked so rough, and black, and dreary as that lava did all around us. But I noticed here and there some hollow places in the black, ugly-looking lava. In these a small quantity of soil had gathered, and from that soil some dear little flowers were springing up and growing. They would have looked beautiful anywhere, but they looked more beautiful there, because everything around them was so rough and dreary.

I looked at those flowers with great interest, and felt inclined to say to them, "God bless you, ye dear little

MOUNT VESUVIUS IN ACTION.

things, for you seem to be trying all you can to soften down the roughness of these lava rocks, and to brighten their blackness by your beauty." You can hardly think how much pleasanter our path over those dreary rocks was made by the sight of these sweet flowers. And as I went on my journey that day, I thought to myself, What a lesson these little flowers teach us! How many people there are in

this world whose way is just as rough, and as dark and dreary, as that path over the black rocks! And if we are kind to them, and show that we feel for them in their sorrows, then we shall be a comfort to them; just as the flowers that spring up in the hollows of the lava are a comfort to those who travel over it.

A little boy named Freddy was very fond of flowers. He came in from the garden one morning before breakfast, to show his mother a beautiful violet. It was the first that had come out that season.

"It is so beautiful, mother," said Freddy, "and smells so sweet, that I am going to put it in my button-hole, and carry it with me all day."

"I think you might do something better with it than that," said his mother.

This set Freddy to thinking while he was getting his breakfast. Pretty soon he guessed what his mother meant. So he looked up and said, "Mother, did you mean that I should take the violet to little Nelly Reynolds?"

"I did, my son," she said.

As soon as breakfast was over, Freddy ran down the lane to Mrs. Reynolds' cottage. She was a widow, who supported herself and her daughter by going out to do washing. This made it necessary for her often to be away from home all day. Nelly was a little girl about eleven years old. She had been a cripple since she was a baby. Her mother had taught her to read and knit, and she had to be so

much alone, her books and her knitting were a great comfort to her. Their cottage was very neat and clean, and their little garden before it was kept free from weeds.

Freddy opened the gate and walked through the garden. The path to the cottage door was white with cockle-shells, for it was near the sea-side.

Nelly was sitting at the window, longing to be out, when Freddy came in with his bright, rosy face, which was enough of itself to do one good.

"Good morning, Nelly," said he. "See what I have brought you! This is the first violet that has bloomed in our garden this spring."

You should have seen Nelly's face, how it brightened up when she saw that beautiful flower, and thought of Freddy's kindness in bringing it to her.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Master Freddy!" she cried. "I do love violets so much. Now I shall look at it, and smell it, and talk to it till mother comes home."

"Why, Nelly," asked little Freddy in astonishment, "how can you talk to a flower?"

"Oh, I can," said Nelly. "It will tell me how good God is to me to make me so happy; and when mother comes home she will be so glad to see it."

"Well, good-bye, Nelly; I must go to my lessons now," said Freddy; and off he ran, feeling very happy.

Now, you see how truly that little flower was a missionary. And it did its work well. It made three people happy that day. Nelly was made happy

by the sight of the flower, and the kindness which had brought it to her. Freddy was made happy by trying to do good: that always makes us happy. And Freddy's mother was made happy by seeing her dear boy trying to overcome his selfishness.

And this shows how we may all be trying to do good. There are people all around us who are sick, or in sorrow, or trouble of some kind. Their hearts are sad. Their path in life is rough and dreary, like that path over the lava rocks on Mount Vesuvius. And if we show them kindness, and try to comfort them in their sorrow, we shall be to them like the flowers that spring up and cheer the traveller in his rough and dreary path over the rocks of lava.

One day a teacher said to his class,—"Boys, you can all be useful, if you will. If you can't do good by great deeds, you can by *little* ones."

The boys said nothing, but the teacher saw by their looks that they thought he was mistaken. They didn't believe that they could be of any use. So he said to them,—"You think it isn't so. But suppose you just try it for one week?"

"*How* shall we try it?" asked one of them.

"Just keep your eyes open and your hands ready all this week, and tell me next Sunday if you have not managed to be useful in some way or other," said the teacher.

"Agreed!" said the boys; and so they parted.

The next Sunday those boys gathered round their teacher with smiling lips, and eyes so full of light *that* they fairly twinkled like stars. He smiled as

he looked at them, and said,—"Ah, boys, I see by your looks that you all have something to tell me."

"We have, sir, we have," they said altogether.

Then each one told his story.

"I," said one, "thought of going to the well for a pail of water every morning, to save my mother trouble and time. She thanked me so much, and was so greatly pleased, that I mean to keep on doing it for her."

"And I," said another boy, "thought of a poor old woman whose eyes were too dim to read. I went to her house every day, and read a chapter to her from the Bible. And I also swept the snow from the pathway to her cottage door. I can't tell how much she thanked me."

A third boy said,—"I was walking along the street wondering what I could do. A gentleman called me, and asked me to hold his horse. I did so. He gave me twopence. I have brought that to put into the missionary box."

"I was walking with my eyes open and my hands ready, as you told us," said the fourth boy, "when I saw a little fellow crying because he had lost some pennies in the gutter. I told him not to cry, and I would help him to find his pennies. I found them, and the little chap dried his tears."

A fifth boy said,—"I saw my mother was very tired one day. The baby was cross, and mother looked sick and sad. I asked mother to put the baby into my little waggon. She did so, and I gave him a grand ride round the garden. If you had only heard

him crow, and seen him clap his hands, teacher, it would have done you good; and oh! how much brighter mother looked when I took the baby in-doors again!"

Thus, by trying, all these boys had found some way of doing good during the week. And by what they did, like the flowers that grow in the lava rocks, they were doing what they could to smooth the rough way and brighten the dark path of those who were in trouble about them.

We have spoken of two ways in which the flowers praise God. One is—*by what they are.* The other is—*by what they teach.* When we think of the first of these ways, there are *five* words to remember, because the flowers praise God by their *numbers*, their *variety*, their *beauty*, their *fragrance*, and their *places.* When we think of the second way in which the flowers praise God—namely, *by the lessons they teach*—we have three lessons to remember. The first is a lesson of *contentment.* The second is a lesson of *trust.* The third is a lesson of *doing good.*

I will now conclude with some beautiful lines by Dr. Bonar, containing a prayer to be made useful:—

"Make use of me, my God!
Let me not be forgot,—
A broken vessel cast aside,
One whom thou needest not.

"Thou usest all thy works—
The weakest things that be;
Each has a service of its own,
For all things wait on thee.

"Thou usest the high stars,
The tiny drops of dew,
The giant peak, and little hill:
My God, oh, use me too!

"Thou usest tree and flower,
The river vast and small,
The eagle great, the little bird
That sings upon the wall.

"Thou usest the wide sea,
The little hidden lake,
The pine upon the Alpine cliff,
The lily in the brake:

"The huge rock in the vale,
The sand grain by the sea,
The thunder of the rolling cloud,
The murmur of the bee.

"All things do serve thee here,
All creatures, great and small;
Make use of me, of me, my God,
The weakest of them all."

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